

WORDS OF calling
V452
ADVICE
TO
Young Men.

DELIVERED IN
TWO SERMONS
At Two Conventions of
YOUNG MEN,

The one *Decemb. 25. 1666.*

The other *Decemb. 25. 1667.*

By *THOMAS VINCENT*, sometime Minister
of *Maudlins Milk-street, London.*

*Prov. 8. 17. I love them that love me, and those that
seek me Early shall finde me.*

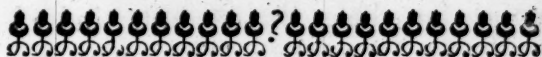
*Psal. 119. 9. Wherewith shall a Young Man cleanse his
way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.*

LONDON,

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TO THE
Youth of the City of LONDON.



HE Lord having given me so great room in so many of your hearts, I am the more encouraged to put these few words of Advice into your hands: Upon your request they were preached in your Ears, and it is for your benefit that they are now presented to your Eyes.

Vox audita perit, litera scripta manet.

That which you only hear, you may quickly forget, and so the words with the sound perish in the Air; when written, especially printed words abide, and may bring to your remembrance the things which you have heard long ago: But if you would have these

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words in these sheets abide indeed with you, better than if they were engraven upon a rock, and written with a Pen of Iron, and point of a Diamond, you must get them transcribed and reprinted, I mean upon your hearts. Your hearts as yet in a great measure, are a *rasa tabula*, like a fair table, or white sheet of Paper in which little is written; Do not furrow the Table with Conscience-wounding sins; do not blot and besmear the Paper with the defilements of Lust: But get the Law of God engraven upon the Table of your hearts, and the Counsels of the most High given you out of his Word written upon the white sheet within you. It is true, the youngest of you are defiled with Original sin, and are grown more foul with Actual transgressions, which none of you can in whole excuse yourselves from, however for the present
you

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you may be free from the more gross pollutions of the World, and not arrived to that degree and height of wickedness, which the audacious sinners of this vicious Age have attained unto : But if you would get the Word written in your hearts, it will both make you clean, and keep you clean, *Psal. 119. 9. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* And *v. 11. Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.*

Dear Youths, my love is great unto your Souls, and my desires are earnest after your salvation; it rejoiceth my heart to see so many of your faces in my Auditory here, it will more rejoyce me, if I may see all those faces in Heaven at last; and truly I hope that many of you will be my Crown and Glory in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore it is that I preach,

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therefore I have written these *Words of Advice* unto you, the chief heads of which are, 1. That you would *seek First the Kingdom of God*, where alone your chief happiness doth lye, as the End. 2. That you would *seek the Righteousness of God*, which is in his Son, that it might be imputed unto you for your Justification, and that it might be imparted unto you for your Renovation and Sanctification, as the necessary Means to attain this End, without which there is no possibility of admittance for you into the Kingdom of God. 3. That (having obtained Grace in the truth of it) you would *labour to grow in Grace*, and to be strong therein, that you might be enabled both to do and suffer whatever God calleth you unto. 4. That you would *get acquainted with the Word of God*, and endeavour that it may abide and dwell in you richly, as the choicest

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choicest of all Treasures. 5. That you would labour to overcome the Wicked one, and all his temptations, whereby he would draw you unto sin, especially those sins which in Youth you are most inclinable unto.

Beloved young men, you live in the dregs of times, in a wicked and debauched generation; take heed of following a multitude to do evil; save your selves from their sins, as you desire God should save you from their punishments. Come out from amongst them, if you cannot in regard of your place, be sure to do it in regard of your course and practice; refrain too familiar converse with the wicked and profane; let your Companions be such as fear the Lord; walk in the way of Good Men; take that course as the most do that seem to be most serious, and to have their faces towards Heaven. I have endeavoured to answer

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swē and remove the chief prejudices which are raised to discourage and divert from this way: You may safely and confidently venture into it, and walk in it, and you will finde (whatever the oppositions and discouragements be therein) the end of it to be peace and happiness. The Lord grant that this Book may be a Means to keep you from sin, and help you forward in the way to Heaven, which is the desire and prayer of

*Your faithfull Monitor, and dear
Lover of your Souls,*

T. Vincent.

WORDS



WORDS of ADVICE
TO
YOUNG MEN.

MATTH. 6. 33.

*But seek ye First the Kingdom of God and his
Righteousness, and all these things shall be
added unto you.*



THESE words are part of our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, in which he spake with so much authority, that the people were astonished at his doctrine, for never man spake as he spake. The subject of this Sermon, is many excellent Promises, Precepts, Directions, Cautions, Exhortations, backed with Motives and Arguments very needfull for the promotion of Holiness in Heart and Life. 1. Our Saviour gives several promises of blessedness both here and hereafter, to quicken his Disciples in their endeavours after some choice Graces and qualifications of minde, and to in-
B courage

courage them against the outward persecution, which for his sake they might meet withall in the world, *chap. 5. from vers. 2. to 15.* 2. He directs them how they should behave themselves as Ministers, and his Disciples, by the similitudes of *Salt, Light, a City set upon a hill*, unto which they had or should have a conformity, from *vers. 15. to v. 17.*

3. He declares the immutability and purity of the Moral Law, vindicating it from the corrupt and false glosses of the Pharisees, and explaining it in its spiritual reach and meaning. 4. He warns them against Hypocrisie in their Religious Services, pressing them in their *Alms, Prayers, Fasts*, to approve their hearts to God, who seeth in secret, that they might receive an open reward, *chap. 6. from v. 1. to v. 19.* 5. He exhorts them to lay up for themselves Treasures in Heaven, and not to be solicitous about the Provisions of this Life; which Exhortation he backeth with six Arguments. The first is drawn from the safety of Heavenly Treasures, being removed beyond the reach of *rust, and moth, and thief*: The second, from the uncertainty of earthly Treasures, which are in danger of being *corrupted and stoln*, v. 19. 20: The third from the inconsistency of the true love of God with the over-eager love of things here below, *Ye cannot love God and Mammon*, v. 24. The fourth from the assurance they might have that the Lord would, without their carking care, provide as much of these things as he saw needfull for them; and that by their experience 1. Of Gods goodness to themselves in things of a far greater moment, namely, in giving them *life* which was more than *meat*, and in giving them *bodies* which was more than *raiment*, v. 15. 2. Of Gods goodness to creatures of far less dignity,

dignity, namely, his feeding the *Fowls*, and cloathing the *Lillies*, v. 26. The fifth from their inability to procure these things by their anxious thoughts about them, v. 27. The sixth, because hereby they did sinfully conform unto the *Gentiles* and *Heathens*, v. 32. And then at last our Saviour directs how to obtain these earthly things without such sollicitousness; namely, by the seeking first of heavenly things, as in the Text: *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

In which words there are two parts,

1. An Exhortation, *But seek ye First the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.*

2. An argument to enforce it, *and all these things shall be added unto you.*

In the Exhortation there is,

1. The Duty, *seek ye the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*

2. The Season or Order, in this word *First*, *Seek ye first, &c.*

In the Argument, which is a Promise, there is,

1. The Things promised, *these things*, temporal things, such as food, raiment, and whatever is needfull for the body, whereof our Saviour had been speaking.

2. The fullness of the Promise, *All these things*, nothing shall be wanting.

3. The manner of conveyance, *they shall be added unto you*, they shall be cast in as appurtenances and over-plus.

SECT. I.

I Shall speak only to the former part of the words, namely, the Exhortation, whence we may observe,

Doct. That it is the great duty of all the Children of men to seek first the Kingdom and Righteousness of God.

In handling of which point I shall shew,

1. *What we are to understand by the Kingdom and Righteousness of God.*
2. *What it is to seek this Kingdom and Righteousness.*
3. *What is implied in this word First.*
4. *That all the Children of men ought First to seek the Kingdom and Righteousness of God.*
5. *Apply.*

1. What are we to understand by the Kingdom and Righteousness of God. There is a three-fold Kingdom of God. 1. The Kingdom of his Power, *1 Chron. 29. 11. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above All.* 2. The Kingdom of his Grace, *Luk. 17. 21. The Kingdom of God is within you.* 3. The Kingdom of his Glory, *Joh. 3. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* The Kingdom of Gods Power be sure is not here spoken of; some understand hereby the Kingdom of his Grace: But I rather think, that in this place the Kingdom of God is to be taken for the Kingdom of his Glory, where the chief and perfect happiness of men doth lye, which our Saviour would have

have them to seek, and not be solicitous about earthly things which are so empty and transitory : And I the rather conceive that it is to be taken for the Kingdom of Glory, because the Kingdom of Grace which is the way to Glory, is included in the next word, namely, the *righteousness of God*, as *Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, &c.* There is a twofold righteousness of God, 1. That righteousness which is imputed to us, whereby we are justified, called the *righteousness of God by Faith*, *Phil. 3. 9.* 2. That righteousness which is wrought in us, begun in regeneration, when we are *renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness*, *Eph. 4. 24.* and in the work of Sanctification is more and more increased and augmented, whereby we grow in our spiritual stature, untill we come to a perfect man, to be perfectly righteous, even as Christ is righteous. The Object then which we are to seek is the Kingdom of God, the Crown of glory, which God hath layd up for his people, the Happiness of Heaven as the End ; and the righteousness of God, reconciliation to him, through the imputation of his Sons righteousness ; and conformity to him through the working inherent righteousness in us by the operation of his Spirit, as the way to this Kingdom, and necessary means to attain this end.

2. The second thing is to shew what it is to seek the Kingdom and Righteousness of God : and here two things are implied, 1. *A diligent Enquiry after these things.* 2. *A diligent endeavour in the use of means to obtain them.*

1. A diligent enquiry after these things, and that both after the things and after the means; such as seek after this kingdom and righteousness, they first inform themselves in the nature, worth and need which they have of these things, and then diligently inquire how they may get a part and interest in them: First, they enquire who will shew us the chief good? We see that the Creatures cannot yield us satisfaction, we cannot finde any perfect and compleat happiness upon the Earth, where shall we finde it? And being informed by the Word and Ordinances that God is the chief good, that his favour is better than life, and that in his righteousness there is the beginning of true happiness, and in his Kingdom there is perfection of happiness; that in his presence there is fulness and eternity of joy and blessedness, and that whilst they remain under the guilt and power of sin, they are under the Curse; and before they obtain his righteousness, and a title to his Kingdom, they are in a lost estate, their condition for the present is miserable, and they are exposed every moment to be thrown into the dark and deep dungeon of Hell, where they shall be most horribly and eternally tormented; they further (being convinced of sin, and awakened with the fear of punishment) earnestly enquire how they may be delivered from the estate of sin and misery, and be brought into a state of salvation; as the Jaylour, *Act. 16. 30.* *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And being told that Christ only can save them from sin and wrath to come; they enquire how they may get an interest in Christ, and share in his righteousness; and being told of the Happiness in the *Zion* which is above, they enquire how they may get a title to the Kingdom of Heaven,

Heaven, and ask the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward, as the Church, *Jer.* 50. 5. Such as seek the Kingdom of God to purpose, they set their faces towards the heavenly *Jerusalem*; their hearts are set upon it, they are resolved to get it whatever it cost them; they ask the way not with their faces Hell-ward, as some do, but with their faces Heaven-ward, being resolv'd to submit to any terms; to make use of any means so they may obtain it:

2. Seeking after Gods Kingdom and Righteousness, doth imply a diligent endeavour in the use of means (having found out what means are requisite) that they may obtain these things. Having found the Field where the Treasure is hid, there they dig that they may possess themselves of the treasure: Having found the Cabinet where the Jewel doth lye, they labour to open the Cabinet that they may get the Jewel: Having found the Shop, the Market where the Oyl is sold, they come to the place and buy: Being informed of a Scepter of grace held forth, they come and lay hold on it: Being informed of a Door of mercy, they come and knock, there they will lye, there they will crye, there they will dye; if they perish, they will perish in the use of means: Pray, hear, read, meditate, they will use any means, which God hath prescribed in his Word, though never so harsh and displeasing to flesh, and cross to their carnal interest; Though the use of powerfull means may be hazzardous, though they may endanger Liberty, Estate, Life, they will not flinch and start aside out of Gods way to his Kingdom whatever enemies and opposition they meet withall therein; they will persevere in the way when the Sun of persecution shines hot upon them, they will

hold on their course whatever the way and weather be, and so by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality, Rom. 2. 7. if by any means they may attain the possession of this Kingdom of God.

3. The third thing is to shew what is implied in this word *First*, *Seek first the Kingdom and righteousness of God.*

Two things, { 1. *Precedency of Time.*
2. *Precedency of Dignity.*

Seek First, that is, { *Before other things.*
 { *Above other things.*

Seek First, that is, { *Timely.*
 { *Chiefly.*

1. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, that is, seek these things *timely*, *before other things*; seek them in the Morning of your Life, in the Spring of your years, in the flower of your Youth. Read Ecclesiastes 12. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy Youth, while the evil dayes come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* Remember thy Creator, that God that made thee, and who alone can new make thee; who formed thy body in the womb, and who alone can form Christ in thy heart; who created thy soul, breathing into thee the breath of life, and who alone can create the New Man in thee after his Image, by breathing into thee his quickening Spirit: Remember thy Creator, who not long since brought thee out of the loathed estate of Nothing, and numbered thee

thee amongst his Creatures; and who can bring thee out of the more loathed estate of sin, and number thee amongst his Children: Remember him, endeavour to know him, how great and good he is, how glorious and gracious; remember him, minde him who is every where present; remember him, get a holy awe and dread of him upon thee; remember him, get an interest in him, and acquaintance with him; remember him, make choice of him for thy God, and chief good; seek his favour, seek his Kingdom and Righteousness: And that Now in the dayes of thy Youth, in thy first years, when it is not long since thou camest out of his hands; remember him in thy Spring and bloom, before the Winter come; remember him in thy best dayes, before the evil dayes, and the years of old decrepid age draw nigh, when thy body may be full of diseases, thy bones full of the sins of thy Youth, and thy Soul full of evil habits, and thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; when God whom thou hast forgot, shall say, I have no pleasure in thee; and thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in my Life; when thou shalt have neither inward nor outward comfort; when thy heart shall say concerning riches, honours, and all sensual enjoyments, I have no pleasure in them; I hoped for good, but I have met with disappointment; I looked for sweetness and satisfaction, but I am more unsatisfied than before; that which I formerly took delight in, hath a bitter taste and reflection: My years now are irksome, and tedious, and I can finde no pleasure in them. This was *Solomons* advice to young men to remember their Creator in the dayes of their Youth, and this is the advice of our Saviour a wiser than *Solomon*, to
seek

seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness; to seek this *timely*, before other things.

2. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, that is *chiefly*, and above other things. The things of this world may be sought; but it must be in subordination to the things of Gods Kingdom: You must make Earth to stoop to Heaven, and the concernments of the Body must give place to the concernments of the Soul; you must let the things of God have the chief of your thoughts and care.

4. The fourth thing is to shew that all the children of men ought first to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God: All are bound to do it by virtue of the Precept in the Text, as well as engaged by their own Interest. It is for Gods glory that they should do it, and it is requisite in order to their own good; and it is very reasonable for men to obey when God commands nothing but what is in order to their own happiness, which they cannot neglect, but it will be to their ruin and destruction: This duty then lyeth upon every one, to seek Gods Kingdom and righteousness; no wealth, honour, dignity, or whatever else this world conceits and flatters can give a *supersedeas* hereunto; no condition, calling, temptation, or whatever engagements any may pretend, can excuse from it; neither the voluptuous inclination of Youth, nor the tedious infirmities of Old Age can be a sufficient dispensation for the neglect of it. The Emphasis of the word *First* I shall reserve to speak to in the word of Advice by and by.

SECT. II.

THE Improvement I shall make of this Doctrine, shall be in two words.

1. By way of Reproof.

2. By way of Advice.

Use 1. For Reproof of those that seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness *last*.

2. That seek these things *least*.

1. That seek the kingdom and righteousness of God *last*; that make this the last business of their time, which should be done first; when their dayes are stretched out to their full length, then they begin to seek after Gods Kingdom; In the mean time putting off Gods Ministers, who warn and call them as *Felix* did *Paul*, untill a more convenient season, *Act. 24. 26*. Thus like Bankrupt Debtors they crave further day, untill as *Job 20. 11*. they are on a sudden clapt up into Prison, and lye down with their bones full of the sins of their Youth.

2. That seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God *least*, who seek these things after a sort, but it is by the by, they do not make it their business; that seek, but it is in a slothfull, careless manner; that seek, but do not strive to enter in at the straight gate, that do not seek heartily, diligently, chiefly; that seek the things of the world in the first place, and the things of Gods Kingdom afterwards, and as those things will suit with their secular interests, and earthly concerns, as if Mammon were to be preferred before God, and Earth were of more worth than Heaven, and the Body more excellent than

than the Soul. I might here both speak of the sin of those persons, and shew how they dishonour God of the folly of those persons, and shew how they are injurious to themselves. But it is the next word chiefly intend.

SECT. III.

Use 2. **O**F Advice, and that to Young Men, to put in practice the duty of the Text, See first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

The chief composition of this Auditory at this time being young men, and the occasion of this Sermon being the desire of young men; I shall therefore address my self wholly unto you, that are young. It is a goodly sight to behold so many of you come together, to hear something for your souls good. I had several Texts propounded to my thoughts to speak unto; this I thought might be as suitable and seasonable as any: Your forwardness to hear, maketh me hope you will be forward to obey. O that my Doctrine might now drop like the dew, and that my words of advice out of the Word of God, might be like the rain falling upon the tender grass, which causeth it to spring: Let it not be like water falling upon so many rocks, which maketh no impression; or like rain upon barren ground which bringeth forth briars and thorns, instead of herbs meet for the Masters use; you know that such ground is nigh unto cursing and burning. *Heb. 6. 8.*

Receive then, *Dear Youths*, the word of Advice which I now give you in the name of my Lord and Master

Master, from whose mouth the Word did first proceed : *Seek first the Kingdom and righteousness of God.* There is a generation of old ones who are going off the stage of the world, and you are coming on in their room ; ere long they will lie down in the dust, and you not long since did spring out of it ; they are almost come to their Journeys end, and you are setting forth on the way ; they are even arrived at the Port, and you are now putting forth to Sea. It is of the greatest concernment in the world to take and follow good advice at the first, before you are engaged too farr. Here therefore I shall put you in minde, that there are two wayes or passages in which all the children of men are travelling ; the one is the way of sin, the other is the path of righteousness : The way of sin is broad, an open, beaten road ; you may easily know it by the multitude of Travellers, it is the course of the world. Your Parents when they bring you into the world, set you down in this way ; and many, yea most of them go before you in it : It appeareth to you the smoothest and fairest way ; it may seem a delightfull way to you at the first, strewed with roses ; such company, such enticements you may have in this way, as may render it most desireable, if you take Sense and Flesh for your guides and counsellors. But let me warn you before-hand that you walk not in this way, you will quickly finde the pleasures in this way to drop and fade, the flowers will wither, the Sun will be clouded, the delights of sin will vanish ; and heavy griefs, and bitter sorrows, and vexation of spirit will succeed, and blot out all the sweet relish you have had of unlawfull enjoyments : You will finde your selves bereaved, and disappointed in that satisfaction

saction and happiness you looked and hoped for in a sinfull course. It is a dangerous way; there are unseen snares in it, and you will receive secret, but deep and mortal wounds, which are beyond the power of man to cure: It is the way which leadeth to destruction, *Matth. 7. 14.* It is the high road to Hell, y^e thither it will bring you: And if there be some sensual sweetness in the beginning of the way, think what bitterness there will be at the end thereof: Think how terrible Death will be unto you, after a life of sin: but think how dreadfull the punishment of Hell will be when you are let thorow the gate of death, into that place of extream and dreadfull torment.

There is another way, namely the path of Righteousness, the way of Holiness, which is narrow and hath a strait gate; which you must go thorow, if you would get into it, namely the gate of Regeneration. It is a way that is difficult to finde, tedious and irksome at first; it is a weeping and sorrowfull way at the entrance, few there be that finde it; most are discouraged by the narrowness and difficulty of it, from putting their feet into it: But it is the way of Life, it is the way to the Kingdom, it is the way of Peace, it is the way of God, it is the way to Heaven. The difficulty is chiefly at the first; the sorrows are mostly in the pangs of the New Birth, in conflicting for passage thorow the strait gate; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning: Trouble may be your companion for a while, but peace and sweetness succeed in its room. If you walk steadily, you will finde it to be a way of such pleasure and delight, as you never did finde or can finde in the way of sin: And if there

or if there should be clouds and rain, and stormy windes
 of trouble and temptation in the Journey, yet the
 latter end will be Peace; be sure there will be rest
 and happines in the Kingdom into which death
 will convey your Souls after they are seperated from
 your Bodies; there you will finde *fullness of joy, and
 pleasure for evermore.*

So that you have here Life and Death set before
 you; Heaven and Hell; eternal Happines and eter-
 nal Misery: the latter at the end of the way of sin,
 and the former at the end of the way of Holines.
 And which will you choose? if you will run with
 the wicked in the same excess of riot, if you will
 follow the multitude to do evil, if you will walk ac-
 cording to the course of the world, fulfilling the de-
 sires of your flesh, and make provision for the satis-
 faction of its lusts; you will be found at last in the
 number of the children of wrath, and the wrath of
 God will certainly come upon all such Children of
 disobedience: If you will live after the flesh, you shall
 die, you shall not escape the stroke of eternal death,
 you cannot avoid the damnation of Hell. But if you
 will turn your feet into the narrow path, and walk
 in the way of Obedience, which is the beginning of
 Wisdom, if you will seek first the Kingdom of God,
 and his righteousness; you have a promise that God
 will provide for you whatever is needfull for you of
 temporal things, and in the end he will give you the
 Eternal Inheritance. Let me press upon you, *dear
 young Men*, the advice of the Text, to *seek first the
 Kingdom and righteousness of God*, seek the Kingdom
 of God as the *end*, and seek the Righteousness of God
 as the *way and means*.

SECT. IV.

I. **F**irst seek the Kingdom of God. Here is a Kingdom proffered to you, not an Earthly Kingdom, but the Kingdom of Heaven: here is a Crown set before you, not a Crown of Gold, but that which is infinitely more precious, a Crown of Glory: As mean as you are, you may be all Princes, Sons and Heirs of the King of Heaven, if you will look and seek after it. Some Youths have aspiring mindes; like the Eagles they soare aloft, and would set their nests among the starrs, as *Obad. 4.* you cannot aspire to a greater dignity, than to get a title to the Kingdom of God; here you may mount as high as you will in your aim without sin, and attain an eternal Habitation, and Mansion above the Stars, even in the Palace of Heaven. Some young men have covetous desires after the World, and they will spare no labour in seeking after earthly riches, and an Inheritance here below: Let me entreat you to covet earnestly the best riches; do not endeavour so much to hoard up riches, as to lay up treasures, I mean treasures in Heaven, *which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break thorow and steal, Mat. 6. 20.* Get a title to the Inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, which Jesus Christ hath purchased and prepared. Some young men addict themselves to the pleasures of the flesh, they are very jovial and frolick in their youth, walking in the wayes of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, and very desirous of carnal delights, and sensual satisfactions; here are delights
and

and pleasures before you of a higher and purer nature, more real and substantial, more durable and lasting. The ways of God are wayes of pleasantness: But Oh what Joyes are there laid up in store, what delights are there in Heaven, in the immediate vision and full fruition of God the chief good! O seek the Kingdom of God, where there are full and everlasting pleasures.

And if you would get a title to this Kingdom of God, and at length possession of it, you must,

1. Study the vanity and emptiness of all things here below; hearken to Reason, which will tell you so, because these things are unsuitable, unproportionable, uncertain, of a fading and perishing nature. Believe the report of the Word concerning the World and all things therein: *Vanity of vanities saith the Preacher, all is vanity*, Eccl. 1. 1. read that book throughout. Take the experience of others, who have tryed the world, and after the fullest and most desirable enjoyment of these things, have come off with dissatisfaction. Think how dangerous it will be for you to try: Let the Rocks which others have split themselves upon, be a warning to you to steer your course another way. Never look for, never seek happiness in the World; believe me, it is not there to be found. And therefore do not lay up your treasure on Earth.

2. Look into the Word, where *life and immortality is brought to light*; where the glory and happiness of Heaven, and the things which God hath there prepared for them that love him, are in some measure revealed. Look into the Gospel, which like a Prospective-glass will give you some view of the glory which is above; there you may perceive that Heaven

is a place of rest, of peace, of light, of joy, of perfect and eternal happiness.

By the Word you may understand what happiness is prepared for the Body, how gloriously that will shine, even like the Sun, and be made like Christs most beautifull and glorious body at the Resurrection: There you may understand what glory will be put upon the Soul, what shining garments of Holiness it will be cloathed withall, and what Joyes of the Master it will be filled with.

3. Compare Earth and Heaven together in the ballance, and see which doth outweigh; whether the exceeding and eternal weight of glory be not more ponderous, than all the glory and happiness which the world can give, which indeed is not so much as the dust of the ballance to compare with it. And having made diligent enquiry and seriously considered and compared both these, then make your choice; the time of your Youth is the choosing time; renounce the World, and make choice of this Kingdom of God for your portion and Inheritance; and be contented to stay for your chief happiness till you come forth of the World: take not that for your portion which will so soon be spent; but choose that which will be both satisfying and everlasting, though you stay some time before you come to the full possession of it.

4. Apply the Promises of Eternal Life, 1 Job. 2. 24. *This is the promise which he hath promised, even eternal life. Titus 1. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, hath promised:* Build upon these and the like Promises, they are a firm footing and ground for Faith, which will not fail.

5. Apply your selves unto *Jesus Christ*, in whom
all

all the Promises are *yea and amen*, who hath purchased this Kingdom, and hath taken possession of it, and alone can give you title and admission.

6. Be earnest for this at the Throne of Grace, that whatever God gives, he would not deny you his Kingdom, that he would not put you off with the world for your portion, that you may not have your good things only in this life; urge the promises of eternal life, shew him his hand-writing, plead the merit and mediation of his Son; resolve to take no denial, press in at the door, strive to get in at the strait gate; endeavour to take Heaven by violence, of which more by and by.

7. Get those qualifications which are needfull to fit you for this Kingdom, which are included in this Word *Righteousness*: And that is the second thing I would press you unto.

II. If you would seek Gods Kingdom, so as to obtain, you must also seek *Gods Righteousness*. Seek *imputed* righteousness; the guilt of sin must be removed before it is possible for any to have admission into the Kingdom of God. You all are guilty of sin, God is offended, his Justice must be satisfied; you are insufficient, being finite; Christ hath made it in your stead, his righteousness is perfect, there must be an imputation hereof unto you, if you would obtain remission of sins, and an inheritance among the people of God. Your salvation doth depend upon your application of Christs righteousness; study your need, get conviction of sin, consider your danger whilst under guilt, understand the intent of Christs sufferings, acquaint your self with the tenour of the Covenant of Grace. And Christ being held forth to you,

lay hold on him by faith, his righteousness being intended for you, and proffered unto you, make application of it; cloathe your selves with it by faith, and therein appear with confidence before God, pleading for pardon and acceptance.

2. Seek *imparted* righteousness: Imputed righteousness is necessary to entitle you to Gods Kingdom, imparted righteousness is necessary to qualitie and prepare you for Gods Kingdom. This righteousness here is imperfect, and cannot be the *causa regnandi*, the cause of reigning, yet it is *via ad regnum*, the way to the Kingdom. This righteousness is begun in Regeneration, and further increased in Sanctification, as hath been said.

1. You must be regenerate, born again, if ever you would see the Kingdom of God, *John* 3. 3. Old things must pass away, and all things must become new, *2 Cor.* 5. 17. As a man must be born before he can possess an Earthly Inheritance, so a man must be new-born before he can possess the Heavenly Inheritance. First you must be Children before you can be Heirs of God; you must be Children by *adoption*, and you must be Children by *regeneration*. Labour then after a gracious change in your heart, see your need of it, apply your selves to God for it; beg earnestly that he would by his Spirit be pleased to effect it; put your selves under the influence of the Word, be ready to yield to the movings and stirrings of the Spirit.

2. Having shot the Gulph, passed thorow the strait gate of Regeneration, and obtained the beginning of the work of grace, you must endeavour after Sanctification, that you may grow up in holiness. You must by the Spirit mortifie the deeds of the

the body; and cleanse your selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; and hereby you will be made meet to be made partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light; and an entrance will be administred unto you most assuredly into the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 7. 1. Col. 1. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 11.

SECT. V.

HAVING thus given you advice as to the thing, to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God, I shall now further advise and exhort you to seek First this Kingdom and Righteousness.

1. Seek First, that is, *Timely*, and before other things.

2. Seek First, that is, *Chiefly*, and above other things.

1. Seek First the Kingdom and Righteousness of God, that is *Timely* and before other things. Do it now in the time of your Youth, in the Morning of your Life, so soon as Reason doth begin to dawn. Here I shall give you three motives to stirre you up to do this in the time of your Youth.

Consider that the time of Youth is

- 1. *The most Acceptable time.*
- 2. *The most Seasonable time.*
- 3. *The most Safe time.*

1. The time of Youth is the most acceptable time, 2 Cor. 6. 2. The Apostle speaketh of the day of the Gospel, and I may speak it of the day of Youth: *Behold now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.* Any part of the day may be accepta-

ble; be sure the beginning of the day is most acceptable. God is best pleased with young ones who seek the things which belong to his Kingdom, and their salvation; that dedicate themselves to his service betimes, before Sathan and the World have ravished their Virgin-affections. Under the Law God required the First-fruits and First-born for Sacrifice, and under the Gospel God requireth the first-fruits and first-born of our time, and thoughts, and affections: The first-fruits under the Law were to be mingled with Oyl and Frankincense, which gave forth a sweet savour, *Lev. 2. 15.* when you devote the first of your time, and parts, and strength to God, this is a sweet savour to him. God taketh especial notice of, and is exceedingly pleased with early seekers, and timely services. *Jer. 2. 2. I remember the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thy espousals;* and *Cant. 6. 11.* we read of Christ, going down into the garden of the Church, to see if the Pomegranates budded; the buddings and blossoms of Youth are sweet and pleasing to Christ: the youngest Disciple was Christs beloved Disciple. It is recorded for the commendation of *Josiah*, that he did that which was right in the sight of God when he was but eight years old, *1 King. 22. 1.* and of *Timothy*, that from a Childe he had known the Holy Scriptures, whereby he became wise unto salvation, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* None are like to bring so much glory to God, as those that seek his Kingdom and Righteousness in their youth; and therefore this time is the most acceptable time.

1. The grace of young persons is most conspicuous; it is like the Morning-blush; like the first opening of the Rose; like a Diamond set in a Ring of gold;

gold; early grace hath a sweet fragrancie, and glorious lustre in it: The beauty of it doth then most shine, and the power of it doth then most appear, when young ones do deny themselves, and take up the Cross, and bear the yoke in their youth; when young ones do deafen their ears against all enticements unto pleasing sins, and break thorow the temptations they meet withall, and with full purpose of heart stick close unto God. This doth shew the power of grace, and tendeth much to Gods glory.

2. The time of young ones is longest which they have to glorifie God; when they seek and serve God betimes, they may not only escape many pollutions in the World wherewith other youths are defiled, to the dishonour of God, and the wounding of their own Consciences; but they may bring much glory to God in their generations. God hath work enough to employ them in (all tending to his glory and their good) thorowout the whole day of their lives, though they should begin in the Morning so soon as they can see, and work a whole and long Summers day, untill the night and darkness of old decrepid years. I might instance in some of the works they are to be employed in; they have a pardon to sue out, evidences to clear, corruptions to mortifie, graces to get and improve, a treasure to lay up, temptations to resist, relations to fill; so many duties to perform to God, to Man: They may finde more work than time; Eternity-work is begun in this life. Now look, as a Master who driveth a great trade, is best pleased with those servants who rise most early, and are most diligent in his business; so God who hath so much work for his people, is best pleased

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pleased with young persons, who seek him early and diligently.

3. The Strength of young persons to serve God with, is the greatest. 1 *Job*. 2. 14. *I have written unto you young men, because you are strong.* Marvellous is the strength and power of grace in some young ones, who have been sanctified betimes, whereby they have been enabled to do him some notable service in the world. In youth, as the Body is most strong and active, so the Soul is most vigorous and lively, and therefore most fit to be employed by the Lord. Seek then Gods Kingdom and Righteousness in the time of Youth, because this is the most acceptable time, God is best pleased therewith.

2. The time of youth is the most *seasonable time.* *There is a time for all things, saith Solomon, Eccl. 5. 1.* The time of youth is the most seasonable time to seek the Kingdom of God. There are four things requisite in seeking Gods Kingdom to all such as would obtain it.

1. *The Breaking of the heart for sin.*
2. *The Breaking of the heart from sin.*
3. *The Opening of the heart to Christ.*
4. *The Furnishing of the heart with Grace.*

The time of Youth is most seasonable for all.

1. You must get your *heart broken for sin*, if ever you would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; you must mourn for sin here, or weep for sin for ever; you must sowe in tears, if you would reap in joy. The time of youth is most seasonable for this; your sorrow is like to be less heavy, and more kindly; The heart hath a natural hardness, but if it hath
got

got a contracted hardness, it will with more difficulty be broken, if ever it be broken: Custom in sin will take away sense of sin; and if you continue in the practice of sin, you will feel a senselessness and stupidity grow upon your spirit; and Conscience more tender and timorous at first, by degrees will grow seared as with a hot Iron, and be past feeling. Bring your hearts therefore now under the hammer of the Word, that they may be broken; the longer you deferre, the harder you will finde it to repent.

2. You must get your *hearts broken from sin*; you must turn from your evil wayes, otherwise iniquity will be your ruine. The longer you continue in sin, the harder it will be to leave sin; custom will be a second nature to you; the changing whereof will be like changing the skin of the *Æthiopian*, and taking away the spots of the Leopard. When sin is rooted and riveted in you, if so be you should turn from it, it will be with unexpressible tearings and divulsions of spirit. It is a hard thing to irradicate old habits, which at first in the tender years may be done with more ease: Therefore, *Dear young ones*, labour to get sin rooted out of your hearts betimes. Get sin mortified before it hath got too much life and strength; oppose sin before it hath got too much head and power, which you may do with more facility and success.

3. You must open your hearts and *give entertainment unto Christ*, if you ever expect to have the gate of Heaven opened unto you, and to be entertained by Christ in his Kingdom. Such as shut the door of their hearts against Christ when they are young, will finde (if Christ doth not withdraw, and leave knocking)

knocking) that the door will be faster bolted and barred within against him; the longer you hold it out, the more will Sathan strengthen the Fort against Christ, and more easily beat off whatever assaults are made upon you by the Word and Spirit. Christ will come in most willingly to them that open to him presently; and the match will quickly be made up, if in youth you hearken to the motion. Let me beseech you, therefore, *my dearly beloved young ones*, to open the door to Christ without any further delay; by me he standeth now and knocketh for entertainment; what answer shall I return, that you have harboured lusts there, where his lodging should be, and would not part with them? that you put me off till a further day, untill you had a little longer tasted the sweets of sin: O take heed of such carriage of heart towards Christ, *Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit*, if you be not willing to open to Christ now, you will be more unwilling to morrow: do it then presently; may I be instrumental to joyn the Lord Jesus Christ and you together in marriage; receive him into your hearts, and accept of him, to love, honour, and obey him, and do it heartily and resolvedly, and he is yours.

4. You must get your *hearts furnished with grace*, if ever you hope to share in the glory of Gods Kingdom. Grace is glory in the seed, and glory is grace in the flower; grace is glory in the root, glory is grace in the fruit; grace is glory in the first-fruits, glory is grace in the harvest: You must get the seed sown, the root planted, or no flower, no fruit, no harvest is to be expected; you must get the Kingdom of Gods grace within you, *Luk. 17. 21.* if ever you would be admitted into the Kingdom of his glory.

and glory. And the time of youth is the most seasonable time for the getting of grace; no time like the Spring for setting of this Plant of grace in the heart; in the youth the heart is more plyable, and like the yielding Wax more ready to receive the impressions of the Spirit.

3. The time of youth is the most *safe time*. If you make it your first care to seek the kingdom and righteousness of God, you are most likely to finde and be successfull; but if you make delayes, you run your selves upon great uncertainties: there is danger that you will never obtain, if you do not seek whilest you are young. The danger lyeth in three respects:

In respect of

- 1. *The Uncertainty of Life.*
- 2. *The Uncertainty of the Means.*
- 3. *The Uncertainty of Gods working by the Means.*

1. In respect of the uncertainty of Life; no Age is secure, and fenced against the arrowes of Death: Some flowers are nipped in the bud; some Springs run into the Sea so soon as they arise; the thred of Life in some is quickly cut, and the Candle blown out within a while after it is lighted. You may dye whilest you are young, and if you do not seek Gods kingdom and righteousness now, you may not have time to seek these things at all.

2. Your danger is in respect of the uncertainty of the Means of Grace: you have now means and opportunities of seeking; hereafter you may be deprived of the means, if you be not deprived of your lives.

lives. You have calls now, hereafter you may be placed where you shall be out of call : you now are planted in a fruitfull soil, where the Sun shines, and the Dews of the Word do fall ; if you remain fruitless God may remove you out of his Garden, or he may withhold the dews, and cause the Sun to retreat into a cloud : He may either take away the Means of grace from you, or take away you from the Means ; and if you do not seek and obtain whilest you enjoy the Means, are you like to do it when you are deprived ?

3. Your danger is in respect of the uncertainty of Gods working by the Means, though he should continue them unto you ; the winde blowes where and when it listeth. In youth you may feel the sweet breath of the Spirit moving upon your hearts ; if you do not hoist up sail when you have a fair wind, possibly you may never have such a winde again as long as you live, God may swear in his wrath that his Spirit shall no longer strive with you, God calleth upon you when you are young, if you refuse, you may hereafter call, and cry, and seek, and knock, and not be heard or answered, and the door be shut up against you for ever. See *Prov.* 1. 24. to the 31. *Mic.* 3. 4. *Zach.* 7. 11, 12, 13. We read of *Esau's* weeping for the blessing to no purpose ; and the foolish Virgins going to buy Oyl when it was too late ; and our Saviour telling *Jerusalem*, that their day was spent, and the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes. There are many that neglect the things of Gods Kingdom when they are young, that have their day of grace set upon them, before their lives be half spent ; God doth leave off calling, and the Spirit doth leave off working, and they are given up to a judicall hardness,

ness, as *Act.* 28. 26, 27. The time of youth then is the most safe time. Hearken then, *O ye young men*, and be perswaded in this your day to minde the things which belong unto your peace, and to seek *Gods kingdom and righteousness*. Seek this first, that is *timely*, before other things, and that you may seek so as to obtain.

SECT. VI.

2. **Y**OU must seek Gods Kingdom and Righteousness *First*, that is *Chiefly and above other things*. These things must have the chief of your study, and care, and labour; you must make it your business, and look upon it as your chief business; if business about the world have more of your time, because of your engagements in your particular callings, yet this should have more of your care and heart. Better miscarry in any business than in this business; better miss of an Estate, than miss of Gods Kingdom; better be a poor begger than remain a guilty sinner; better the body be cloathed with rags, than the soul be without the white robes of Christs Righteousness; better the body were starved, than to have the soul damned; the greatest poverty and misery in this life which can befall you, is not to be compared with the eternal misery of Hell, which in the neglect of the duty of the Text you cannot escape. And suppose you should gain the whole world, what is that in comparison with the gain of the Crown of Glory? what is earthly riches compared with heavenly treasures?

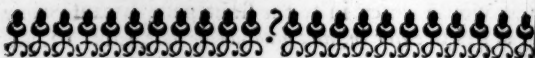
1. The *worth* then of Gods Kingdom, which is an Inheritance beyond any purchase, except that of the

the blood of Christ; and the excellency of this Righteousness, which when it is imputed, doth bring with it pardon of sin, the favour of God, the peace of Conscience, and sometimes the unspeakable joyes of the Holy Ghost, which the whole World were you possessed with it could not procure: Where this Righteousness is imparted, it doth include all the graces of the Spirit, which are the choicest Jewels, the chiefest Ornaments, the best Riches, the least measure of which is of more worth than ten thousand worlds, and will stand you in more stead in a dying hour, and be of only signification and advantage when you come forth of the body, and appear (naked, stripped, quite naked and bereaved of all earthly enjoyments) before the Judgement-seat of God; I say, the worth and excellency of Gods Kingdom and righteousness should move you to seek after it above all other things.

2. The necessity of this Kingdom and Righteousness should further stirr you up to employ herein your chief care. It is the *Unum Necessarium*, the One thing necessary; other things you may have, and you may be without, but you must have a title to Gods Kingdom, or else you cannot be happy; you must have Gods Righteousness imputed and imparted, or else the guilt of sin will remain, and you will continue servants and slaves to sin, and cannot escape the punishment of sin, the dreadfull and eternal punishment of sin in Hell. There is a necessity of the thing, and there is a necessity of seeking it chiefly, or else you are not like to obtain; especially if you consider,

3. The difficulty of obtaining; it is no easie thing to get to Heaven; you must labour if you would
enter

enter into this Rest, Heb. 4. 11. you must strive if you would enter in at the strait gate, because many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, Luk. 13. 24. You must take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, if you would take it at all, Matb. 11. 12. not as if there were opposition from within, for God is willing to entertain you, the Lord Jesus is ready to set open the door before you, the Spirit is ready to help you; but there is opposition about the walls (as it were) of the place; Sathan he buildeth Forts and strong Holds, and casteth forth his fiery darts, to drive you off, when you make any attempt this way: You will meet with opposition from the Devil and the World, and chiefly from within your selves, when you do in good earnest set your faces towards Heaven; therefore you had need labour and strive, and make it your chief care and business to get into this Kingdom. You are in a Sea as it were, where there are waves of trouble beating upon you, a tide of inward corruptions working against you, and a boisterous winde of temptation to carry you back; you had need to row hard, if you will get to the Haven. You are travelling in the narrow path, where there are many by-paths, and many enemies to oppose you; you had need look well to your way, to get on the spiritual Armour, and fight the good fight of Faith, if you would obtain the Crown at the end of your way, and at last lay hold on Eternal Life. To conclude, let me exhort you so to seek that you may finde, so to run that you may obtain, so to fight that you may overcome, that after all your travail and pains you may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God.



I J O H. 2. part of the 14 Verse.

I have written unto you Young Men, because ye are strong; and the word of God abideth in you; and you have overcome the wicked one.

THE Author, or Penman which was employed in writing this Epistle, was *John* the Beloved Disciple. The chief subject of this Epistle, or duty which herein he exhorteth unto, is *Love*, Love to God, and Love one to another. The Persons to whom he writes this Epistle are all Believers in the general, and particularly according to the three Ages of Men, he dedicateth his Epistle unto Fathers, unto Little Children, and unto Young Men. The Text may be termed Young Mens Epistle: *I have written unto you young Men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you; and ye have overcome the wicked one.* Where the Apostle doth give three Elogiums or commendations of these young men, 1. That they were strong, 2. That the Word of God did abide in them. 3. That they had overcome the wicked one.

To observe Doctrines and prosecute them, might require too much time and room, and not be altogether so profitable: I shall choose rather to spend my whole discourse in a Use of Exhortation drawn from the Text unto you young men, who have called

called me hither to preach unto you this day : and what the Apostle doth write of these young men in the Text by way of Commendation, I shall commend unto you by way of Exhortation. There are three great duties which I from this place exhort all you young men unto :

1. Labour to be strong.
2. Labour that the Word of God may abide in you.
3. Labour to overcome the wicked one.

1. Young men labour to be strong.

And here I shall shew $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ In what} \\ 2. \text{ To what} \\ 3. \text{ In whom} \end{array} \right\}$ ye should be strong.

(1.) *In what* ye should be strong. In generall, labour to be strong in Grace : Read the Exhortation of the Apostle unto his Son *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 2.1. *Thou therefore my Son be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.* Labour whilst you are young to get grace; above all gettings to gain this riches which is of far more value than all earthly treasures; some of you are of one trade, and some of another, and you endeavour to get an Estate hereby; let me advise you all to trade for grace, which will be an Estate it self during your abode here, and will be the earnest to you of an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter : Labour to get grace in the truth of it; take heed that you be not mistaken, and deceive your selves with dross and brasse in stead of true gold, I mean with counterfeit instead of true grace : And labour to get grace in the strength of it; Grace is strong in it self; it can do more than all

the wisdom and learning in the world; let it be strong in you; the Fountain is in Christ, let the Stream be in you; in him is the Ocean, labour that as full and strong tides as may be, may flow from him into your hearts. Let the habits of Grace be deeply and strongly rooted in you, and live in the powerfull exercise of those habits.

Particularly labour
— for strength

1. *Of Faith.*
2. *Of Love.*
3. *Of Desire.*
4. *Of Hope.*
5. *Of Joy.*

1. Young men, labour for strength of *Faith*: some of you have strong bodies, others have strong memories, others have strong fancies; labour all of you to get a strong faith. Faith is an excellent grace, it is more precious than gold, 1 Pet. 1. 7. labour to get faith, and a strong faith. *Abraham* was strong in faith, and hereby he brought glory to God, Rom. 4. 20. shew your selves to be children of faithfull *Abraham*, by getting such a faith as he had for kinde, and such a faith as he had for measure; this will be for Gods glory and for your honour. Let your faith have a strong bottom, a firm and sure footing; build it not upon the sand, or earth, much less upon the waters, but build it upon the Rock, upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Rock of Ages; build it upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone; build it upon the Word of God in the Scriptures, and build it upon Christ who is held forth in the Word. Let your faith have a strong bottom, and let your faith put forth it self in strong actings; let your assent be strong

Strong unto divine Truths; and let your recumbance be strong upon Christ and the Promises of the Gospel. Get a strong eye of Faith to discern those spiritual objects which cannot be seen with the eye of sense, to look upward to God, and the glory which is about his Throne, to look downward to Hell, and the torments which the damned do there endure for sin, to look forward to the coming of Christ, and the general Judgement of the World at his appearance; and get a strong hand of faith to lay fast hold on Christ, to apply his righteousness for the remission of sin, and to receive his Spirit for the cleansing you from filthiness, and perfecting holiness which is begun in you. Let your trust and confidence be strong in God through his Son: Young men are apt to be too credulous, too ready to believe and put confidence in men, when the Scripture telleth us, that all men are Lyars, if not actually so, yet they may be so, and the most are so; young ones before they have tryed the world are apt to trust in men, old ones that are more experienced, are more cautious; but you cannot put too much confidence in God; he cannot lye, he never deceived any, he never will fail them that put their trust in him. Some trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but let your trust be in the Lord; some trust in Princes and great persons, others in Hosts and strong Forces, most in arms of flesh, which are weak, and cannot give that help as is expected; but let your confidence be in the Name of the Lord, who is a shield and buckler, and present help to his people in the time of trouble; whose Name is a strong Tower into which the righteous may flye and be safe, in times of the greatest danger, *Prov. 10. 18.*

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Be strong in Faith, according to the strength of this grace, all your other graces will receive strength, Faith being the Nurse of them all.

2. Young men, labour for *strong Love*. In the time of youth affections do spring, and they put forth themselves with more strength and vigour than in the cold winter of Old age: *Dear Youths*, endeavour that your affections may be directed to the right objects, that you may not defile your affections with sin, nor debase your affections with the world; that you may not by misplacing your Love, lose your Love, and with the loss of your Love, lose your Souls and your happiness. You may love, and that with the greatest strength you have a capacity for, and it is your duty to be strong in Love, but then let it be carried forth in this order,

1. *To God,*

2. *To one another.*

1. Be strong in *love to God*; your hearts now will settle upon something; they will work some way; if they do not work upward, they will work downward; if they be not placed upon God, they will be placed upon the Creature. You have now many suitors for your love; all the sensitive alluring objects which are about you would entice and ravish your hearts; but these things if they seem fair, will wither and prove deceitfull, they are unworthy of your love. Give me leave to be a suitor for your love; let me beg your Love for God and his dear Son. This is the first and great Commandement, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your minde, *Matth. 22.*

37, 38. God commandeth you to love him, it is your duty ; God alloweth you to love him, it is your priviledge ; God doth chiefly require your love ; *My Son, give me thy heart.* If you give any thing, every thing you have besides, and keep back your heart, it will not be accepted : And God doth best deserve your love ; he is the most suitable object for your love ; other objects will debase your love, God will ennoble and dignifie your love : you cannot bestow your love better ; none so amiable as God, especially as he represents himself in his Son : If you look for greatness, he is the most great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth : If you look for power, he is Omnipotent, hath done, and can do whatever he pleaseth : If wisdom hath a beauty in it in your esteem, his understanding and wisdom is infinite : If truth, faithfulness, mercy, goodness be amiable in your eyes, he is truth it self, and cannot lye ; he is full of mercy and kindness, he hath most tender bowels, he hath riches and treasures of grace and goodness : If love be an attractive of love, his love is beyond comparison, beyond conception ; there is a height in his love which cannot be reached ; a depth in his love which cannot be fathomed ; a breadth and length in his love, which cannot be comprehended ; his love is first, without any beginning ; his love is free, without our deserving ; his love is constant, without any changing ; his love is eternal, without any ending : He is most lovely, this should draw forth your love much ; he is most loving, this should draw forth your love more ; he is love it self, 1 *Jch.* 4. 8. God is love, not only hath love, but is love ; he is all beauty and sweetness, all goodness and kindness, all bowels and love, O what an incentive

should this be to your love ! whither are your hearts wandring ? O gather in all your scattered affections, and fix them upon this most beautiful object ! place your love upon God now, before it be too far engaged to something else, from whence it may be very difficult to withdraw ; love him with all your heart ; love him truly, and love him strongly ; love him sincerely, and love him fervently ; love him supremely, and love him constantly ; let the fire of your love ascend to him, as to its sphere ; let the stream of your love run to him, and lose it self in the Ocean of his goodness, where alone it can finde suitableness and satisfaction ; here you may bathe your selves without fear of drowning ; here you may expatiate without fear of exceeding ; here you can never transgress the bounds of love ; love him strongly whom you can never love too strongly. Be strong in love one to another ; you may love one another, and you ought to love one another ; love is the summ of the Law, the first Table is fulfilled in love to God ; the second Table is fulfilled in love to your neighbour. See how the Apostle expresseth it, *Rom. 13. 8, 9, 10. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery : Thou shalt not kill : Thou shalt not steal : Thou shalt not bear false witness : And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.* There is a common love which you should bear to all, even to the wicked and your enemies, which should not only with-hold you from offering any injury unto them, or rendring evil for evil ; but also should put you

you upon doing good offices for them in reference to their reputation, estate, relations, bodies, as the Lord doth put opportunities into your hands, and they stand in need of your help: You should be pitiful towards the worst in their distress; if your enemy hunger, you should feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: You should bless them that curse and revile you; do good unto them that hate you; pray for them that despightfully use you and persecute you: You should be loving and courteous in your converse and behaviour towards all men; you should grieve at their afflictions, rejoyce in their good, and be glad of occasions wherein you may shew a real affection to them you have acquaintance with; chiefly you should express your love to their souls in your prayers, friendly admonitions, hearty counsels; you should endeavor to awaken them, whom you see sleeping on the brink of the bottomless pit; to reduce them that are hastening in the broad way of sin towards their own destruction; you should use arguments with them to leave their sins, and to close with Jesus Christ; especially if any of your relations and near friends in whom you have interest, be in a state of nature, you should use all possible endeavours to perswade them to draw in the easie yoke of Christ with your selves: Thus you must love all strongly: but you must love them that bear the Image of God upon them, that love and fear the Lord most strongly: Your love to the Brethren must be unfeigned, pure and fervent, as the Apostle directs, 1 Pet. 1.22. This will be an evidence to you that you are Disciples of Christ, *Joh. 13. 35. By this shall all men know, much more may yourselves know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* This will be an evidence that

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ye are passed from death to life, *1 John 3. 14. We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren.* This will be an evidence that ye are born of God, and have a true knowledge of him, *1 Job. 4. 7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.* You should mingle your converse with Gods people, with hearty and fervent love, which will be pleasing to God, sweet to your own spirit, and advantagious to them you converse withall: You should be made up of love and kindness; pass by injuries, bear reproaches, cover infirmities, sympathize with sorrows, relieve necessities, joy in the good of others as if your own, and be ready to do good to all, especially to them who are of the household of faith. This is the second grace you should abound in, namely, the grace of Love.

3. Young men, labour for *strong desires*; not after riches, and honours, and pleasures, and friends, though these things in their place, and order, and measure, may be desired; but if they be desired chiefly, if they be desired too strongly, the fruit will be, not the looked for good and satisfaction, but disappointment and vexation to your selves, besides the displeasing of God hereby: But let your desires follow your love; let them be carried forth chiefly, and most strongly towards God, and the things which concern his Kingdom and Glory, your own peace and salvation. Because you lie under the guilt and power of sin without a Christ, labour in the first place after strong, earnest, thirsting desires after Jesus Christ

Christ and his Righteousness, that you may have your sins pardoned, and hearts renewed : Cry out, *None but Christ, none but Christ* ; give us a Saviour, or else we are lost ; give us Christ, or else we die and perish eternally : Let your strong wishes be, O that we had an interest in Christ ! O that our hearts were united and joyned to Christ ! O for a drop of his blood to sprinkle our consciences ! O that he would undertake for us ! that he would be our Advocate to plead for us, and reconcile us unto the Father ! Let your prayers be, Lord, thou hast given thy Son for us, give thy Son to us ; thou holdest forth thy Son, help us to lay hold on him ; thou callest us to thy Son by thy Word, draw us to thy Son by thy Spirit ; thou hast put thy Son to death for sin, and accepted of the sacrifice which he hath offered, O that our sins might be forgiven upon his account ! Let your desires go forth strongly after the favour of God ; there are many that say, Who will shew us any good ! Lord, shew us thy face ! Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon us ! Desire earnestly with *David*, the presence and communion with God in his Ordinances, as *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the daies of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, &c.* And *Psal. 42. 1, 2. As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God ; my soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God, when shall I come and appear before God !* Many young men have earnest desires after the company of their friends, that are of pleasant conversation ; let your desires be carried forth most earnestly after the company and communion with God in his Ordinances, wherein the chiefest pleasure is to be found : There-
fore

fore prize and desire Ordinances for the sake of God ; because they are the means of bringing you and God together ; of joyning your hearts unto the chief good ; and if you desire the company of men, let it be the company of Gods Children, who are the excellent of the Earth. Labour for strong desires after the Image of God, that you may be holy as he is holy ; after conformity to Christ, in his death by dying to sin, and readines to suffer for his sake ; in his Resurrection, by your newness of life : Let your desires be strong after the Spirit, that he might be given to you, and abide in you ; desire every grace of the Spirit in the highest measure, and content not your selves with any degree ; desire the comforts of the Spirit, the joyes of the Holy Ghost ; desire strength for every duty, that you might be made use of to glorifie God in your generation ; that you might be kept from sin, rather than from any evil ; that you might be made victorious over all your spiritual enemies ; especially let your desires be carried forth with the greatest strength after the Crown of glory, the undefiled and never-fading inheritance in Heaven, after the beatifical Vision, and full fruition of God in the New *Jerusalem* ; the perfection of holiness and happiness which is reserved for hereafter ; the fulness and eternity of joy in Gods glorious presence ; and desire the hastening of Christs second appearance, that he would come quickly and put you into the possession of that Inheritance which he hath purchased and prepared for you.

4. Young men, labour for *strong Hope*. Young men usually are big with hope and expectation of some great

great things in the world; they hope for such an estate, and then that they shall be content; such delights and sensual enjoyments, and then they shall be happy, and satisfied; but they that are elder, and have had greatest experience, finde the world, and all things in it, to be empty and vain, and their hopes have been frustrated: however, being unacquainted with higher things, their hearts are still most irrationally set upon the world; but I would exhort you young men to have higher hopes than worldings, and let your hopes be strong. Do not hope for much in the creature, it hath not what you hope for, but let your hope be in God, let your expectation be from him only: Do not hope for much here below; this is not the place of your rest and happiness; but let your great hopes be of things above; as your desires should be strong after them, so your hopes should be strong of them. Hypocrites have some kind of hopes, but they are thin weak hopes; like the Spiders web, *Job 8. 14.* which is easily torn in pieces by the wind; the wind of affliction doth rend the hopes of Hypocrites from them; they have hopes, but such as quickly perish and are cut off, *Job 13. 14.* They are like the giving up the Ghost, *Job 11. 20.* When they give up the Ghost, their hopes give up the Ghost; they and their hopes perish together, because they are groundless and presumptuous. Labour therefore for a strong hope; such a hope as is well grounded, which will end in fruition, and never in disappointment, and make ashamed. Let the object of your hopes be God, and the things which are above; and let the bottom, the foundation of your hopes, be those two immutable things the Apostle speaketh of, *Heb. 8. 17, 18, 19, 20.* *Wherein God*
willing

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willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of Promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entred into that within the Vail, whither the fore-runner is for us entred. The two immutable things which are the foundation of our hope, are Gods Promise, and Gods Oath; his Promise, *This is the Promise which he hath promised, even eternal life, Job. 2. 25.* His Oath which he sware by himself to Abraham, and in him to all his children; *Surely blessing, I will bless thee, Heb. 6. 13, 14.* which doth include eternal blessedness. God who cannot lye giveth his Promise and his Oath: God who can do whatever he will, and will do whatever he hath promised; here is a good ground for your hope to build upon; let your hope be strong, let it be a strong anchor to your soul, sure and stedfast; and that it may be so, it must not be cast downwards, like those of ships, which are cast to the bottom of the waters; but they must be cast upwards into Heaven, into that within the Vail, whither the Lord Jesus Christ the fore-runner is for us entred to prepare Mansions for us. Let your hope of Heaven be strong and lively.

5. Young men, labour for *strong Joy*; if your hopes be strong, and well grounded, you may thence have strong consolation, *Heb. 6. 18*, That which discourageth many young men and women from putting their feet into the waies of God, is the apprehensions

hensions which they have, that should they engage in this way, they must bid farewell to all mirth and cheerfulness, to all delights and pleasures, and make tears and sorrows their companions, which they are loth to do at least too soon, whatever necessity they see there is of being religious: Whereas, although grief and sorrow be needful to sinners at their first engagement in the waies of God, to imbitter sin, and prepare them for the more ready closure with Jesus Christ; and a mixture of sorrow is needful after, because of the mixture of sin in their lives, and the better to ballance and temper the spirit; yet the Lord doth call his people to higher delights and pleasures in his waies, than can be found in the waies of sin. God doth not require that his people should lay aside all delights, but change their sinful delights for those that are spiritual and heavenly: God giveth them leave to rejoyce, and he commandeth them to rejoyce; not in waies of sin, he forbiddeth the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season; not excessively in the creature (though moderately and subordinately they may) but they may and ought to rejoyce in himself. Read what Solomon saith to young men, *Eccles. 11. 9. Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the daies of thy youth, and walk in the waies of thine heart; and in the sight of thine eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement.* Young men, you may rejoyce and be cheerful in your youthful daies, but if your joyes be in the waies of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; if your joyes be in the waies of sin, in the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, if it be in satisfying the desires of your flesh, and pleasing your senses unto the dishonour and displeasing of God;

God; know, that God will bring you into judgment, and then all your sinful, sensual delights will be turned into bitterness and terrour; but you may be cheerful in the waies of God; and if you are reconciled unto God through his Son, and have an interest in his favour; if you are renewed after his Image, and have a Title to his Kingdom; you have reason to rejoyce more than any wicked persons in their greatest outward prosperity. Shall the slaves of Satan rejoyce, and have not the children of God more grounds? Shall the wicked rejoyce that are dancing upon the brink of Hell, and are ready every moment to tumble into the burning lake? and should not you rejoyce that are come to the borders of the heavenly *Canaan*, and live in hopes of the glory of the New *Jerusalem*? Rejoyce in the Lord continually, *Pbil. 4. 4. Rejoyce in the Lord alwaies, and again I say rejoyce.* And rejoyce in the Lord greatly: Strong joy will be your strength, it will be a means to quicken all your affections towards God, and make you shine brightly in the sphere where the Lord hath placed you.

Thus I have shewed *in what* you should be strong.

SECT. II.

(2.) **T**HE second thing is to shew *To what* you should be strong.

There are four things unto which you should labour to be strong.

1. *To do.*
2. *To suffer.*
3. *To fight.*
4. *To die.*

1. Young

1. Young men, labour for strength *to do*; you have many things to do, great things to do, necessary things to do, and difficult things to do. I am not now speaking of the works of your particular callings which require strength of body; but I am speaking of the works of your general calling, as Christians, which do more immediately concern Gods glory, and your own salvation; such as treasuring up a stock of saving truths; making your peace with God; getting your hearts broken for sin; closing with, and living by faith upon Jesus Christ; getting your hearts furnished with every grace; living in the powerful exercise of it; denying your selves; mortifying the deeds of the body; laying out your selves, time and talents for the glory of your Master; standing daily upon your watch; improving the means of grace; worshipping God, and seeking him diligently in publick, family, closet; making it your business to be religious; laying up your treasure in Heaven; and labouring to get your heart more loosened from things below, and raised and fixed upon things above; these, and the like things, are the works which the Lord requireth of you all; all other employments are of an inferiour nature: These things you must do here, or you will not have opportunity for them hereafter: These things you must do, or you are undone for ever; and since they are hard works to flesh and blood, therefore you had need to get much strength to enable you hereunto; I do not mean external strength, but internal spiritual strength: weak sickly men cannot endure hard labour; you must be strong, that you may work for the Lord, that you may work for eternity.

2. Young

2. Young Men, labour for strength to suffer, I mean to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ. If you would be Christs Disciples, you must take up his Cross and follow him, *Math. 10. 24.* and sometimes his Cross is very weighty. It is not a weak shoulder that can bear an heavy burden; and it is not a weak Christian that can bear an heavy Cross, that can endure weighty and pressing afflictions. You must therefore get much strength, great strength, that you may suffer great things for the sake of Christ; otherwise you will shrink when you are put upon the tryall; you will be offended when sore persecutions do arise for the Word. The Apostle prayeth for the *Colossians*, chap. 1. 11. that the Lord would strengthen them with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. *Young ones*, look for sufferings, reckon upon them, and make full account of them before-hand; and prepare for sufferings, get on winter Garments against winter seasons, I mean suffering graces against suffering times. Get strength for sufferings, labour to be strengthened with all might according to Gods glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness: Get strength to endure much, and to endure long, and to endure not only with patience but also with chearfulness, looking upon it not only as your duty when called to suffer for Christ, but as the greatest honour that can be conferred upon you in this life, and as that which will work for you an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

3. Young men, labour for Strength to *fight*, not with men, not with one another; you must take heed of a quarrellsome and contentious spirit; but get strength to fight with your spiritual enemies, which of all enemies are the strongest and most dangerous: Young ones, you are called to be Souldiers in your most tender years, when you engage yourselves to be Christs disciples, you list your selves under his Banner, you wear his Livery, and carry his Colours; you have need then of strength, that you get Victory over your enemies, the Devil, the Flesh and the World, which warr against Christ, and warr against your own souls: Those that warr with men have need be strong in body, and you that are to warr with sin and Sathan, and the allurements of this present evil world, had need be strong in Spirit. You have need of strength to resist strong temptations, to subdue strong corruptions, and to get the victory over such strong enemies.

4. Young men, labour for Strength to *Dye*. It is a great thing to dye, and hard thing to dye as a Christian; it requireth strength to resign up the Soul, when sickness and death come, which none can escape; but you may be called to lay down your Lives for the testimony of Jesus Christ; you may be deprived not only of Liberty and Estate, and all the comforts of this life, but also of Life it self too, if you will cleave to Christ, and hold fast his Truths; this you must prepare for, and resolve upon, otherwise you do not reckon what it may cost you to be a

Christian, and you do not accept of Christ upon the terms of the Gospel: you have need of great strength to be enabled to dye for the sake of Christ. Think, that you may be called to dye for Christ, and if you should, that this would be the most honourable death, that you cannot keep your life long, and cannot lose it upon a better account; that if at such a time you should seek to save it, you would within a while lose not only your natural life some other way, but lose eternal life, and be eternally miserable. Thus *To what* you should be strong.

SECT. III.

(3.) **T**HE Third thing is to shew, *In whom* you should be strong.

Negatively, you must not be strong in your selves; either to do, or suffer, or fight, or die; for in your selves you are utterly insufficient for any of these things; of your selves you can do nothing; if you undertake any duty in your own strength, you will fail either in the thing, or in the manner of performance; if you fight in your own strength with your spiritual enemies, they will be too hard for you, you will be wounded and beaten to the ground: If you think to suffer or die for Christ in your own strength, you will start aside when you are put upon the tryall. You have read of the self-confidence of *Peter*, *Deny thee! I will dye first*; and yet he denyed his Master when he was tryed; you know not what spirits you are of; you are not yet, it may be acquainted with the deceitfulness of your own hearts,

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be not self-confident, be not strong in your selves.

But *Affirmatively*: Be strong in the Lord, as the Apostle doth exhort, *Eph. 6. 10. Finally, Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and the power of his might. Our Saviour telleth his Disciples, Job. 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing*, and they found it to be so; therefore the Apostle doth disclaim all self-sufficiency, *2 Cor. 3. 3.* Yet however weak and nothing as he acknowledgeth himself to be, he telleth us, *Philip. 4. 13. I can do all things through Christ strengtbening me*: Let me then direct you to the right fountain of strength, apply your selves to the Lord; *I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me, (saith David) and strengthened me with strength in my soul, Psal. 138. 3.* Beg of the Lord, that he would strengthen you with might by his Spirit in the inner man, as *Eph. 3. 16.* When you feel your strength to fail or decay, apply the Promise which God hath made of renewing the spiritual strength, *Isa. 40. 31.* Thus much for the First Duty, *Young men, labour to be strong.*

SECT. IV.

2. **Y**oung men, labour that the Word of God may abide in you; There is a two-fold Word of God,

1. *The Essential Word*, which is Christ the Son of God, *Job. 1. 1. 1 Job. 5. 7.*

2. *The Written Word*, which is the Scripture, *1 Theff. 2. 13.*

I shall speak concerning the Word of God in both acceptations.

1. Let the *essential Word* of God, let Christ abide in you. Let Christ abide in your hearts. And here are two things I would exhort you unto.

1. *To get Christ into your hearts.*

2. *To keep Christ in your hearts.*

1. Labour to *get* Christ into your hearts; young men, be perswaded now to receive Jesus Christ into your hearts: The time of your youth is the best time to receive Jesus Christ; if you do not receive Christ now, it is a great question whether you will ever receive him; very few that refuse Christ when they are young, ever are perswaded to accept of him afterwards; Christ stands now at the door and knocks, if any will open to him, he will come in, *Rev. 3. 20.* Christ knocks by Judgements, by Mercies, by Word, by Ministers, by his Spirit; when you feel some secret movings and stirrings upon your spirit to thrust out sin, and let in Christ: when you have inclinations and perswasions to receive Jesus Christ, then Christ is knocking by his Spirit; open then the door, comply with those motions, and give Christ entertainment; he is the best inhabitant that ever you received: untill Christ be received, some base lusts will inhabit your hearts; and which is the best Inhabitant, judge ye. Christ where he inhabiteth doth ennoble, Lust doth debase; Christ doth beautifie, Lust doth deform; Christ doth enrich, Lust doth impoverish; Christ doth purifie, Lust doth defile; Christ doth cure, Lust doth distemper; Christ giveth peace and comfort, Lust doth bring trouble, and is the parent of eternal sorrow and woe. O then, give entertainment forthwith unto Jesus Christ; now you may have him, and all in him, all with him; if you refuse him now, you
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may never have another proffer of him made unto you so long as you live. And if you would receive Christ, you must part with sin ; if you would receive him, you must lay hold on him by Faith, *Job. 1. 12.* *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believed on his Name.*

2. Labour to keep Christ in your hearts. Seek him, seek him diligently, till you finde him, and having found him, hold him, keep him carefully ; when he knocks let him in, when he is in keep him there ; embrace him close in the arms of your Faith and Love ; bring not in any Inhabitants which may juttle him out of his Lodging : let Christ abide in you without disturbance.

2. Let the *Written Word* of God, the Scriptures abide in you. The Book of the Holy Scriptures is the most excellent Book that ever was written : It is the Book of God. If an Angel should write a book, I believe you would get and study such a book, were you capable of understanding it ; much more should you study the Scripture, which is of Divine Inspiration. This is Gods Book, and his only written Book : there are not many Books of God to burden your memory ; you may read it over many times in your Life ; it is translated into your Mother-tongue , that you may read it ; and it is written for the most part in a plain easie style, that you may understand it ; and it is full of most excellent matter :

The Matter of
the Word is

1. *Doctrinal.*
 2. *Historical.*
 3. *Prophetical.*
 4. *Preceptive.*
 5. *Promissory.*

In all the Word of God is most excellent.

1. The *Doctrine* of the Word of God is most excellent. In the Word you have the highest *Doctrines*, concerning God, his one Nature in three Persons; concerning Christ, his two Natures in one Person; concerning the Church, the mystical union of Christ the head, and all Believers his members; concerning mans Redemption by Christs death; concerning the way of mans salvation by the Covenant of Grace, and the like. Look into all the writings of Philosophers and the wisest Heathens that ever wrote, who have had the greatest learning, and largest understanding of things, and you shall finde no *Doctrine* they have taught to be in the least comparable with the *Doctrine* of the Scriptures. What are all the Arts and Sciences in the World? what are the most subtle speculations, the most accurate and rational discourses concerning the secrets and mysteries of Nature, in which the most knowing have been puzzled, and fallen short of a full understanding, in comparison with the *Doctrine* of the Word, and the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, which are revealed in the Scriptures?

2. The *History* of the Word is most excellent: In the Word you have the *History* of the Creation; the history of the Old World; the history of the Flood; the history of the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*

morris with Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, the history of Gods calling *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, the history of Gods bringing the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt* with many signs and wonders, through the Red Sea and Wilderness, into the Land of Promise; the history of the *Jewish* Pædagoꝑy, and Gods various dealings with his Church before Christ came; but especially you have the history of Christ; his birth, his life, his works, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his session, and intercession at the right hand of God; the history of the first plantation of the Gentile Church by the Apostles, their preaching and success, and the like: Look into all the Historians which have written, and where shall you finde such an history as is in the Scriptures? Surely there is no history like to the history of the Bible for antiquity, for certainty; no history in which you have such concernment as in this history; you may read of the memorable acts of some great Princes and famous Captains, which may yield some pleasure to your fancy, but you are never the better or the worse for what hath been done by these men so many years ago; but you are concerned in the history of the Church, in the history of Christ the Saviour of the World, your salvation and happiness doth depend upon his birth, and death, and resurrection, and appearance in Heaven to intercede for you.

3. The Propheſie of the Word is most excellent; not to say any thing of Propheſies already fulfilled concerning the children of *Israel* in the Old Testament, concerning the First appearance of Jesus Christ foretold long before: In the Word you have Propheſie concerning the calling of the *Jewes*, the

destruction of Antichrist, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; which yet we are in expectation of. Especially you have prophecy of the end of the World, of the conclusion of Time, and of what God will do with the children of men when Time, and all the by-us-visible-place shall be no more. You have prophecy of the second most glorious appearance of Jesus Christ to Judgement, of the Punishment which shall be inflicted upon all the ungodly in Hell; of the Reward which shall be given unto the righteous in Heaven: This is a great and most sure, and most excellent Prophecy. Some men have taken upon them to foretell future things, and have been foully mistaken; and what they have foretold have been but of small moment in comparison: This Prophecy of the Word is most sure, because the Prophecy of God, who knoweth all future things, inso-much as he is omniscient, and all things depend upon his decree. And these things he hath foretold are of the greatest weight of any other things which he hath made known before-hand to us, that we might prepare for that which is afar off.

4. The *Precepts* of the Word are most excellent. It would be too large to discourse of the Precepts in the Moral Law, and the sweet commands of the Gospel, where you have such admirable rules for the government of the thoughts, heart, affections, speech, behaviour, and whole conversation, as are not to be found in the Books of the most exact Moralists that ever wrote.

5. The *Promises* of the Word are most excellent. Promises of all temporal things needfull; Promises of spiritual favours; promises of eternal happiness; promises suitable to all our wants; promises precious,
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of things of the greatest value ; Promises free, without condition of merit ; Promises sure, of a God who is most powerful and most faithful. The matter then of this Word of God is most excellent ; therefore young ones be perswaded to study this Word ; let this Word of God abide in you.

1. Labour to get this Word of God.
2. Labour to keep this Word of God.
1. Labour to get this Word of God.
 1. To get it into *your minds*.
 2. To get it into *your hearts*.

1. Get the Word of God into *your minds*, so as to understand it, so as to believe it. And that you may do so, I would advise you to take a right method herein, that you would begin with the Principles of Religion. One that would have a good understanding in the Tongues, must first learn the Grammar : One that would attain knowledge in the Art and Sciences, must begin first with the Principles, the Rudiments and Elements of them : And so one that would attain a good understanding in the Word of God, must begin with the Principles of Religion, which are collected together in the most easie way to understand in Catechisms, where you have the great fundamental truths of Religion, which are necessary to be known, believed and practised in order unto salvation, set down by way of question and answer. And because some Catechisms are very deficient in giving clear light, and some are very full : I shall above all commend to you the Catechism of the Assembly of Divines, where all the heads of Religion are proved out of the Scripture, which is the fountain

tain and foundation of all : and I would have you first to learn the shorter Catechism exactly , with the proofs ; then proceed to the larger Catechism and confession of faith ; and as you go along, labour to understand the meaning of every thing you learn ; and not only to get a notional understanding, but also a spiritual discerning, and to mingle these great truths with faith, to receive and believe what you finde proved by the Scripture to be the Word of God, and therefore most firmly to assent to them. For this end you must look up to the Lord, and make your prayer to him, that he would give you his Spirit to teach and lead you into all truth. Besides learning Catechisms, you must keep a constant course of reading some portion of Scripture every day, and labour to carry about with you something of the Word in your minds, which you may entertain your thoughts withall, when you get them off from other business.

2. Get the Word of God into *your hearts* ; endeavour that your hearts may be affected with the Word ; let not only your minds receive light by it, but also your hearts receive warmth by it. Imitate *David* in his affections to the Word, which you may read especially in the 119. Psalm, in his prizing the Word, v. 71. *The Law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.* In his love to the Word, v. 97. *O how love I thy Law ! it is my meditation all the day.* In his desires, v. 82. *My eyes fail for thy Word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me ?* And v. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgements at all times.* In his hope, v. 81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy Word.* In his delight, v. 162. *I rejoyce at thy Word as one that findeth great spoil.*

2. Labour

2. Labour to keep the Word of God; let the Word of God abide in you; do as *David*, *Psal.* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* And take *Solomons* advice and encouragement, *Prov.* 4. 20, 21, 22. *My Son attend unto my words, and encline thine ear unto my sayings; Let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart; for they are life to those that find them, and health to all their flesh.* There are three things in the Word which you should especially keep:

1. *The Truths of the Word.*
2. *The Commandments of the Word.*
3. *The Promises of the Word.*

1. Keep the *Truths of the Word*; buy the Truth whatever pains it cost you; but never sell the Truth, whatever you may get by it: Seek for the Truth as for silver, and dig for it as for hidden treasures: And having found it, keep it as a treasure; do not part with it upon any terms. If you make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, you will make shipwreck of your souls upon the rocks of perdition and destruction, and be drowned in the Ocean of Gods wrath: Therefore you must earnestly contend for the Faith, that is the Doctrine of Faith, the Truths of the Word once delivered unto the Saints, *Jude* 4. You will have attempts made upon you by the Agents of Hell, by the Instruments of the Devil, to rob you of the Truth, and to give you damnable errors instead of soul saving Truths: But as you desire the salvation of your souls, hold fast the Truths of the Word; get on the girdle of Truth; let the loyns of your mind be girt about with the Truth, *Ephes.* 6. 14.

Let

Let not the Truth hang loose in your minds, lest it be snatched away from you, but get the Truth girt; get it fastned and fixed; get it rooted and riveted, that you may not be wavering like a wave of the Sea tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine; labour for a mind established in the Truths of the Word.

2. Keep the *Commandments of the Word*; labour that your hearts may be cast into the mould of this Word; get the Law written upon the Tables of your heart as with a Pen of Iron, and point of a Diamond; and let your life be a fair Copy of the Law; let the Precepts of the Word be exemplified in your conversations; let all men know what God requireth by your obedience; shine as lights in the places where you live, that others seeing your good works, may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.

3. Keep the *Promises of the Word*; look upon the Promises as your great Christian charter, as your choice treasure, as your store-house, where are laid up the most rich provisions. Acquaint your selves with the Promises of the Word, and apply them; lay up the Promises in your heart, and make use of them daily; plead them at the Throne of Grace, fetch supplies from them, feed upon them, live upon them, delight your selves in them, go to them for strength when weak, for recovery when sick, for quickening when dull, for softning when hard, for enlargement when straitned, for succour when tempted, for cordials when fainting, for comforts when troubled. Thus for your second duty: Young men labour that the Word of God may abide in you.

SECT. V.

3. **Y**oung men, labour to overcome the wicked one. By the wicked one we are to understand the Devil, who is called the wicked one by way of eminency, because the Devil was the first wicked one, and is the most wicked one, and is the cause of all, or most of the wickedness in the world; he drew our first Parents unto the first sin, and he hath a hand in the greatest sins that are committed by their Posterity, and therefore all the wicked are called the children of the Devil, *Job. 8. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do.* Then this wicked one is overcome, when his temptations to sin are resisted and repelled.

Young men, labour to overcome the wicked one. The Devil is very busie about young men.

1. *To prejudice them against Gospel obedience.*
2. *To draw them into the commission of sin.*

I shall give you advice how you may overcome the wicked one's prejudices, and how you may overcome the wicked one's temptations.

1. The wicked one would prejudice you, and so keep you from the obedience of the Gospel; and here his prejudices which he would raise in the minds of young men, are

1. *Against Professours.*
2. *Against the Profession of the Gospel.*

1. The wicked one doth endeavour to raise prejudices against the Professours of the Gospel in young and tender minds, to keep them from Gospel-obedience, by representing Professours unto them.

1. *As*

1. *As rude and illiterate.*
2. *As foolish and unwise.*
3. *As proud and singular.*
4. *As factious and rebellious.*
5. *As hypocritical and wicked.*

1. The wicked ones doth represent the Professours of the Gospel to young ones, as *rude and illiterate*; that it was first preached by ignorant and unlearned Fisher-men, and since entertained by none but such; that the greatest Scholars, and most learned Doctors in the world, reject and slight it: If the Gospel were so eligible, would it not be more entertained by the learned? Who can judge so well of the worth thereof as they? That you may overcome this prejudice, know,

1. That the Gospel began to be preached by the Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, who had more knowledge, than all the Doctors and learned men in the world, who came down from Heaven to reveal the Gospel unto men, and was the greatest Prophet that ever lived upon the face of the earth.

2. That the Apostles, though Fisher-men at the first, and illiterate in regard of humane learning, yet that they received from Jesus Christ extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby they attained more knowledge than all the writings of men could teach them; and that the Doctrine both of Christ, and which they preached was confirmed by many miracles, whereby it is manifest that it came from God.

3. That there have been, and at this day are many learned men, which have, and do receive the Gospel; I might give instance in many learned Fathers, who had knowledge in all sort of learning, and by their writings have given evidence to the world, that they were zealous defenders of the faith

of the Gospel; and all along unto this day, there are as learned men as any in the world, who are Ministers of the Gospel.

4. That if many learned men do slight the Gospel, it is through Gods just judgement upon them, who lean to their own understanding, whom he giveth up to a reprobate mind, as not needing their learning to defend his Truths.

5. That if the greatest number of Professours are ignorant and unlearned in regard of humane learning, yet they have divine learning; they are not skill'd in the writings of men, but they have skill in the Scriptures; they are not taught by men, but they are taught by the Spirit of God; they do not understand the mysteries of nature, but they understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven: Unto which I might add, that it is for Gods glory to make choice of such persons who will give him the whole praise of their instruction and salvation.

2. The wicked one doth represent the Professours of the Gospel, as *foolish and unwise*; that it is for want of cunning that they do not take any course to thrive in the world; that it is for want of wit they deny themselves the profits, and pleasures, and dignities which they might have in a sinful way.

That you may overcome this prejudice, know,

1. That the wicked of the world are the veryest fools, and above all others the most unwise: Are they not fools that wound themselves by sin, that wound their consciences? which is worse than wounding their flesh; that run headlong to their own ruines, and are the cause of their own eternal destruction? Are not they foolish and unwise that endeavour to please their flesh, more than to please God?

God? that chuse gold before grace, Earth before Heaven? that when they are capable of salvation and eternal happiness, do neglect and refuse it, preferring the good things of this life before it, which they will certainly, and they know not how soon they may be deprived of.

2. That sincere Professours of Religion have above all others the greatest wisdom: None are so wise as those that make their peace with God; that get their feet out of Satans snare; that flee from the wrath to come; that chuse God for their portion; that deny themselves some sensual satisfactions, that they may obtain eternal pleasures: Those are the most wise, that are wise unto salvation; that have the wit to thrive in grace, that make provision for eternity.

3. The wicked one doth represent Professours as *proud and singular*; that they are a company of self-conceited persons, that think themselves wiser than the whole world besides; that they affect singularity, and are needlessly precise, and make the way to Heaven narrower than it is.

That you may overcome this prejudice, know,

1. That sincere Professours, of all others, are the most humble persons; they have the highest esteem of God, but they have the lowest esteem of themselves. Indeed they have high designs, they are very ambitious, they cannot be content with earthly riches, and honours, but they must be Kings and Princes; they are ambitious of being made Sons and Daughters of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven; this is a lawful ambition, but yet withall they retain the lowest thoughts of themselves, and look upon themselves as unworthy of the least mercy.

2. That sincere Professours are indeed singular and precise,

precise, but they do not affect more than what God doth command, and more than what is necessary unto salvation; they do not make the way narrower than God hath made it. Our Saviour telleth us, that *strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that finde it, Mat. 7. 14.* They dare not blot that verse out of the Bible, lest God should blot their names out of his Book; they dare not do as the most do, lest they go to the same place of endless misery, whither the most are hastening; they know they must be singular, otherwise they cannot be sincere; they must walk in the narrow way, and strive to enter in at the strait gate, or else they shall never be admitted into the New Jerusalem.

4. The wicked one doth represent Professors as *factious and rebellious*: That they are a company of seditious and lawless persons, that they are disobedient to the Civil Magistrate whom God hath set over them.

That you may overcome this prejudice, know,

1. That none are more obedient unto the Civil Magistrate in lawful commands, than sincere Professors, because they know if in such things they disobey man, they do more displease God; and therefore that this calumny of the Devil, which was the false accusation of our Saviour, that he forbade to pay tribute to *Cesar*.

2. That indeed when the Civil Magistrate doth command any thing unlawful and repugnant to the Law of God, that then they think they are bound to obey God their supream King, rather than any man living on the earth; then they chuse rather to displease the greatest man, than to wound their own consciences.

3. That if when unlawful things are commanded by the Civil Magistrate, though they cannot, they dare not obey actively, yet they will obey passively by submitting meekly and patiently unto the penalties of their Laws for their supposed crimes.

5. The wicked one doth represent Professors as hypocritical and wicked; that they make a fair shew, but they have rotten hearts; that they are all a company of hypocrites, and secretly wicked, and would not stick at any sin upon occasion more than others who make no profession, which he would induce them to believe, because some here proved hypocrites, and fallen quite away, who have made as high a profession as any, and therefore that they are all alike: Moreover that some whom all account to have been sincere, have committed as great sins as the most wicked on occasion, as *David's* murder and adultery; and then Satan doth employ his instruments, some to invent and raise slanders on many sincere persons, especially the most faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and others to divulge them, and endeavoureth what he can that all might believe them, that young ones especially may hereby be prejudiced against all Professors, and by consequence be kept from obedience unto the Gospel.

That you may overcome this prejudice, know,

1. That it is very irrational to conclude, that all Professors of the Gospel are hypocrites, because some are so. I believe you will not be kept from taking money, because some have proved to be brass, silvered over: Though all be not gold that glistereth, yet all gold glistereth: The counterfeit of sincerity is an argument that there is sincerity; and if the falling away of some doth evidence hypocrisie, the standing

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and perseverance of others in the waies of God to their lives end, doth evidence that they are sincere.

2. If some that are sincere have fallen grossly; yet let me tell you, that there are but few sincere ones, whom God doth suffer all their daies to fall into such sins. Young *Joseph* had opportunity, inticements, secrecy to commit adultery with his Mistress, and yet he stood; he did not dare to do that great wickedness and sin against God: And I believe there are thousands of sincere and humble Christians, that would chuse rather to be torn to a thousand pieces, than to commit that, or any other gross sin: It was a noble Christian spirit in that young man, who, when inticed by a Harlot to commit adultery, and he could not defend himself with his hands, they being tyed, bit off his tongue, that the pain thereof might quench all natural desires after the pleasure which she most obscenely provoked him unto.

3. That such of Gods children that have fallen into sin, have not fallen often, have not layn long; have not lived in a course of sin, have bitterly bewailed it, been deeply humbled for it; and as God hath permitted this, that backsliders might not despair of mercy, that all might see where their strength lyeth; not in themselves, but in God; and that they all might stand upon their watch, and take heed of dallying with temptations; so those persons have risen again by repentance, and been more careful in their walking afterwards.

4. Since the report of some sins which are fastened upon some Professors and Ministers through the cunning of the Devil to prejudice people against the waies of God, are meer lyes, and slanders, and abominable falsehoods; therefore you should take

heed of hearkning to such reports, and believing them without sufficient proof. It is the rule of the Apostle, not to receive an accusation against an Elder, but before two or three witnesses, 1 Tim. 5. 19.

2. The wicked one doth endeavour to raise prejudice in the minds of young ones, to keep them from obedience to the Gospel, against the way that Professors walk in.

- Representing it {
- 1. As an uncertain Way.
 - 2. As a difficult Way.
 - 3. As an unpleasant Way.
 - 4. As a reproachful Way.
 - 5. As a dangerous Way.

(1.) The wicked one doth represent the Way of the Gospel that Professors walk in as an *uncertain Way*. That Professors are divided; some say this is the way, and some say that is the way; and therefore he would perswade young ones to hold on in their course of sin, until all sides are agreed, and then let them come into the way.

To overcome this prejudice of the wicked one, know,

- 1. That you must never think to come into the waies of God, nor obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, if you stay till all are agreed, because this is not likely ever to be in this world. If you should resolve not to eat till all the Clocks in the City should strike twelve together, you must resolve to starve and die: So if you will resolve not to come into Gods waies, till all Professors are agreed, you must resolve to die in your sins; whatever uncertainty there be apprehended

hended in the way to Heaven, be sure the way of sin you are walking in is the way to Hell.

2. That there is a necessity as the Apostle speaks, that there should be heresies, that they which are approved might be made manifest, 1 Cor. 11. 19. There are two wayes whereby God doth trye his people, and make manifest their sincerity: One, by persecutions; when persecutions arise, many hypocrites drop off, and flinch away, and leave the sincere to bear the brunt: The other is by Errour and Heresie; and here some hypocrites that have held out under some kinde of persecutions, do fall away, and drink in the poyson of damnable errors, unto the destruction of their souls; but the sincere hold fast the Truth, and it is impossible that they should be deceived, because of Christs promise, undertaking, and the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in them.

3. That though the great disagreement is between the orthodox and heretical, yet there may be a disagreement between the orthodox, the sincere amongst themselves, but it is only in circumstantialls of Religion, not in Fundamentals, and all of them be in the same way to Heaven, and meet at the Journeys end, where they shall disagree no more.

4. That the way of God is certain, the uncertainty is from our own blindness.

Qu. But what shall poor ignorant persons do, that have but weak judgements, mean parts, to understand which is the right way?

Answ. 1. I answer, First, that such are not so often, and so foully mistaken, as those who have great parts, and lean to their own understandings.

2. Let such therefore be humble, and keep close

to the Ministry and Ordinances of Christs appointment, that they may not be led out of the way: when they break over this hedge they will wander in the mist and darkness, and hardly finde the way again.

3. Let them apply the Promises which God hath made of pouring out his Spirit upon simple ones. *Prov.* 1. 23. and of leading them by his Spirit into all truth, *Job.* 18. 13.

4. Let them do and practise the will of God which they know, and they shall be established in the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, *John* 7. 17.

(2.) The wicked one doth represent the way that Professors walk in as a *difficult way*: There are many hard sayings that they cannot hear, there are heavy yokes which they cannot bear; there are difficult duties required which they cannot perform. he would perswade young ones that they will never be able to walk in such a difficult way, therefore they had better hold on in the more easie way of sin.

To overcome this prejudice of the wicked one know,

1. That the most difficult things are the most excellent things, *Pulchra quæ difficilia*: though it be a difficult way, it is the way of God, not the way of the Devil; it is a clean way, not the way of wickedness; it is the way to the Crown, to the Kingdom, not the Road that leadeth to Hell, and therefore,

2. That it is a necessary way: it is necessary that you come into this way, if you would be happy, you would escape eternal misery.

3. That the difficulty is not from the way, but from your selves, from your own lusts, which are the

the weights that hang about you, and maketh the way to seem difficult and tedious to you : lay aside those weights, and the sin that doth easily beset you, and you may not only walk, but run with easiness in this race, *Heb. 12. 12.*

4. That though it be a difficult way to flesh and blood, yet it is easie with God to help you, and he hath promised to help you, to write his Law in your hearts, to remove your natural enmity and indisposition, and to give you suitableness of spirit to his Law, and to cause you to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgements, and do them, *Jer. 31. 34. Ezek. 36. 27.*

5. That the greatest difficulty is at the first : when you have accustomed your necks to his yolk, and your backs to his burden, you will acknowledge *that his yolk is easie, and his burden is light.*

(3.) The wicked one doth represent the way that Professors walk in as an *unpleasant way* : he would perswade young ones, that they must never look for a pleasant hour any more, if they will be religious ; that their laughter must be turned into weeping, and their joy into heaviness : that there is required so much repenting and mourning, that they will never endure it.

To overcome this prejudice of the wicked one, know,

1. That indeed you must repent of sin, if you would be saved, and your sorrow in some measure must last so long as your lives last, because of the lasting of sin.

2. That you must mourn for sin here, or else you must burn for sin in Hell, where you will mourn without measure, without end, and to no purpose.

3. That you cannot avoid sorrow, if you should continue in the way of sin, pride crossed, the world failing, afflictions unexpected coming upon you, which are born with chearfulness by the children of God, may be heart-breaking to you; one time or other you will have sorrows in a sinfull course; and is it not better to have godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, than the sorrow of the world and lust which worketh death and destruction?

4. That if you can obtain a kindly sorrow for sin, which is a sweet melting of the heart with the sense of Gods love, you will find more pleasure to your inward man than ever you did in all the delights of sin.

5. That you are not required in this way to throw away all your comforts in your creature-enjoyments, but only to deny your selves the excess and inordinacy, which where it is taken, breeds more bitterness in the disappointment, than ever it yielded sweetness unto any: You may take a subordinate comfort in friends, and habitation, and food, and the like, and herein more reall comfort through the sweetning of these things with Gods blessing and love, than ever you could finde in these things before.

6. That though your sinfull delights must be denyed, yet God hath promised other delights in exchange, he will give you spiritual delights: If you walk closely and strictly, and do not wound your selves by your sins, you may have such sweet peace and refreshing joyes in the light of Gods countenance, and sense of Gods love, in communion with God here in his Ordinances, and in hopes of the
beatifical

beatifical vision, and full fruition of him in glory hereafter in heaven, as have never entered into the heart of natural men to conceive.

7. Whatever sorrow you have for sin now, and whatever griefs for afflictions which in this life you are exposed unto, yet consider that it is but for a little while: Yet a little while, and these sorrowes will be turned into joyes, *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*, Psal. 30. 5. and if you sow in tears, you shall reap in joy, if you go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, you shall doubtless return again rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you, Psal. 126. 5, 6. at least when you come to heaven, you shall have rest, in the New *Jerusalem* all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes, when you enter into your Masters joy, then all sorrow shall come forth and depart, sorrow and sighing shall flee away and never return more, your joy in Heaven will be full and eternall; and should the unpleasantness of the way discourage you from coming into it?

(4.) The wicked one doth represent the way of the Gospel which Professors walk in as a *reproachfull way*; he would discourage young ones from this way by the scorns and divisions they are like to meet with, that they shall be scoffed at, and reproached by their companions.

To overcome this prejudice of the wicked one, know,

I. That they are the most vile and contemptible persons in the World that reproach and deride Gods people, and it is as ridiculous a thing for them to do it, as to laugh at the shining of the Sun: It is as if black, deformed, crooked persons should laugh
and

and deride at those who are most fair and beautifull, and therefore their reproaches and derisions are not in the least to be valued.

2. That such as are reproached for Religion by men, are most highly honoured by God and Christ, he esteems them as the most excellent persons here, and he will own and crown them in the face of the world at the last day.

(5.) And lastly, the wicked one doth represent the way that Professors walk in as a *dangerous way*: he would perswade young ones, if they come into this way they will run themselves upon great hazards and dangers, they may lose their Estate, they may lose their Liberty, they may lose their Life.

To overcome this prejudice of the wicked one, know,

1. In reference to *Estate*, which you may lose, if you should lose Estate (which you ought to reckon upon) in the way of God, 1. Possibly you may not keep your Estate in a way of sin; some lusts may be as expensive to you as others Consciences are unto them; and if 2. You have less of the world, you may not have the less comfort; if the stream fail, you may fetch comfort from the Fountain. 3. None can take away the treasure of grace in your heart, nor deprive you of the treasure of glory in heaven, and whatever you lose of wealth for Christs sake, will have an abundant recompence in that which is of an higher nature.

2. In reference to *Liberty*; 1. That though men may cast your Bodies into a Prison on Earth, yet they cannot cast your Souls into the Prison of Hell. 2. Though they may take away your civil liberty, yet they cannot take away your spiritual liberty and
privi-

priviledges; they may shut friends out from seeing you, but they cannot shut you out of the presence of God, nor keep you from the Throne of grace.

3. In reference unto Life: 1. That though men may destroy the Body, yet they cannot destroy the Soul; and 2. you must dye, as was shown before, and you cannot die upon a better score: unto which I may adde, that I believe none in the world dye with more peace and joy than those that dye for the testimony of Jesus, and of a good Conscience. My dear young ones, labour thus to overcome all the prejudices of the wicked one, whereby he would keep you from coming into the wayes of God, and yielding obedience unto the Gospel, that is the First.

SECT. VI.

2. **L** About to overcome the *Temptations* of the Wicked one, whereby he would draw you to the commission of sin.

Sin in its own nature is so black and odious, that if your eyes were but opened to see what dishonour it reflecteth upon the pure and holy God, and how it defileth your own Souls once made after the image of God; you could not choose but loath and abhor it, and with hatred you would flye from it as from a Pestilential disease, or venomous Serpent, and no arguments would perswade you to commit it, or give it any room or harbour in your hearts; therefore the wicked one doth use the greatest art and cunning to paint and colour over sin with fair glosses,

glosses, that the monstrous nature and deadly poyson of it might be hid from your eyes and knowledge.

And as God hath his methods in the conversion of young ones, and useth many arguments by his Ministers and Spirit, to perswade them unto the practice of Religion: So Satan hath his methods and arguments to draw away young ones from God unto the commission of sin, and continuance therein.

1. The first work of God upon young Converts, is Illumination of the Understanding, he opens their eyes to see their sin and misery, the way of salvation by Christ, the beauty and excellency of holiness; so on the contrary, Sathan the wicked one, called *the God of this World*, doth endeavour to blind the eyes of young ones, to keep them in the dark, that the light of the glorious Gospel might not shine upon them, to discover either their sin or their Saviour; and he endeavoureth to stir up in them a hatred of the light, that so they might sin without reproof, or controul.

2. The second work of God upon young Converts, is Contrition, he awakens their Consciences, filleth them with fears and terrours through apprehension of his anger, and the dreadfull wrath that hangs over them, and they know not how soon may fall down upon them, and sink them into the lowest Hell for their sin, that hereby they being terrified, may apply themselves without any delay unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of mankind: So on the contrary, the wicked one doth labour to still and calm, and quiet the Consciences of young ones under the guilt of their sins; to lull them fast asleep, and keep them from all disturbances, from an
unquiet

unquiet Conscience, which if awakened, would plead the cause of God against sin.

3. A third work of God upon young Converts, is a powerfull bending and enclining the Will to embrace Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Advocate, and to resign up it self in full compliance with his will in every thing: So the wicked one doth endeavour to stiffen the wills of young ones against Christ and the Law of God; he doth what he can to corrupt and deprave it, and to draw it unto a full bent and resolution for sin.

4. A fourth work of God upon young Converts, is upon their heart and affections, whereby he draweth them and engageth them for himself: So on the contrary, the wicked one is very busie in tampering with the affections of young ones; and as God doth use arguments in effecting a gracious change upon young Converts, so the wicked one doth use arguments to perswade them unto the practice of sin; which arguments are his temptations.

Young men, labour to overcome the Temptations of the Wicked one, and that I may help you herein, I shall

1. Set before you as in a glass the chief Temptations whereby the wicked one doth draw young men unto sin, and endeavour to arm you against those Temptations, that you may overcome.

2. Caution you against the particular sins of Youth, which the wicked one would draw you unto, and then shut up my Discourse with a word of Encouragement.

1. Concerning the *Temptations* whereby the wicked one doth endeavour to draw Young men unto sin. And here I shall speak of the Five most ordinary *Temptations* whereby young ones are drawn unto sin.

1. *By the delight and pleasure of sin.*
2. *By the glory and repute of sin.*
3. *By the utility and advantage of sin.*
4. *By the pretended smallness of sin.*
5. *By the hopes of future repentance.*

(1.) The first *Temptation* whereby the wicked one draweth young men unto the commission of sin is *by the delight and pleasure of it*; and here he is very cunning in the management of this temptation, that it may take effect.

1. He laboureth to hide from the eyes of young men those pure, spiritual, and more excellent pleasures; those heavenly, ravishing, and far transcendent delights and joyes which are to be found in God both here, and chiefly hereafter; perswading them, that the wayes of God are irksome and unpleasant, which is furthered by their own experience, they finde them to be so to them upon a little tryall, for want of a spiritual appetite to relish that reall sweetness which is in them; for as Angels cannot relish carnal pleasures, because they have no carnal senses, so neither can carnal persons relish spiritual pleasures, because they have no spiritual senses.

2. He laboureth to hide from them the sting and bitterness of sin, the sorrow and vexation which it will certainly produce in the conclusion; he covereth the

the hook out of their sight, laboureth to divert their thoughts from all serious considerations of the gall and wormwood that is in the bottom of the cup.

3. He represents the delights of sin as most sweet and satisfying; as present and at hand, and easie to be had without difficulty and labour; and sometimes as secret too, which no mortal eye can take notice of.

4. He joyneth in with the lusts of their hearts, with which he hath a secret correspondence, and proposeth such objects unto them as are most suitable and desireable. It is by the pleasure and delight of sin that most young men are bewitched and perswaded to the commission of it. It was by the pleasantness of the forbidden fruit that this Old Serpent enticed our first Parents to eat thereof, and hereby it is that he doth entice their posterity.

Dear young men, labour to overcome this temptation of the wicked one, by the delight and pleasure of sin, by taking into your most serious thoughts these few Considerations.

1. Consider, that all the pleasures of sin are low, mean, empty, thin, unsatisfying pleasures; they are sensual and brutish: A beast can finde more pleasure in the most of them than you can do, who are capable of higher pleasures; these delights may please your sensual appetite, but they cannot satistie your rational souls; they may satiate and glut the senses, but they cannot content the heart: The Devil and lust may promise full satisfaction and contentment, if you will commit such and such sins, but they alwaies fall short in the performance. I would ask these three questions of the most luxurious persons. 1. Whether

ever

ever they found so much pleasure in any sin as they expected and desired? 2. Whether the choicest of their pleasures have not in a short time brought a weariness and trouble upon their spirits? 3. Whether this weariness and trouble hath not been more irksome and grievous to them, than their sensual pleasures have been pleasing and delightful? yea let me add a fourth: If amongst the choicest and chiefest of their delights in which they finde most sweetness, they had but one delight without change and variety, whether that delight would not quickly lose its nature, and prove a torment to them? If they were bound alwaies to eat, or continually to drink, or without intermission to be alwaies in the act of adultery, would not this be more bitter than sweet? These pleasures are unsatisfying; the soul can be satisfied with nothing beneath the enjoyment of God, by whom, and for whom it was made.

2. Consider the shortness of these pleasures: The Apostle calleth them pleasures of sin for a season, *Heb. 11. 25.* And as he saith of some meats, that they perish in the using, *Col. 2. 22.* so some pleasures they perish in the enjoying; the enjoyment of them doth put a period unto them; and those that are most durable, they quickly flit away as a cloud or vapour, which if not blown away by the wind, they vanish of their own accord: If the stormy wind of outward affliction do not puff out the candle of wicked mens joy, yet the daies of old age are drawing on, in which they shall say, They have no pleasure in them, *Eccles. 12. 1.* Death be sure will sweep them all away; there will be no sinful pleasures in the other world.

3. Consider the sting of the pleasures of sin, which

is not in the mouth, but in the tail: Grief and wounds, and piercing sorrows, will be the issue of sin: Sin hath a far differing aspect in the temptation before it is committed, and in the reflection after it is committed, especially when they begin to be plagued for it: In the temptation sin looketh fair and beautiful, and with a pleasant countenance; but in the reflection it is black, grisly and terrible: Hence it is that wicked men who can delight themselves so much in the fore-thoughts of sin when they are enticed unto it, yet cannot endure to look back on sin with fore-thoughts of the account they must give unto God for it. Sin, though never so pleasant, will in a short time produce more bitterness a thousand-fold, than ever it did yield sweetness. Besides, the lashes and stings of conscience which sensualists sometimes have in their secret retirements; how are they (if any thing awakened) at their latter end even utterly consumed with terrors: But O the horrible anguish that will seize upon their spirits so soon as they are separated from their bodies! O the tearings that they will feel of the never-dying Worm, when they are clapt in the dark dungeon of Hell, where they will be under the immediate impression of the wrath of the sin-revenging God! It sensualists did but believe, and seriously consider the pains which they must endure in body and soul for ever for their sinful pleasures, it would quench their desires after them. If the Drunkard did see *Dives*; instead of his bowls and goblets of rich wine, begging for a drop of water to cool his tongue, surely they would sooner drink poison, than drink unto excess: If filthy fornicators did but know what dreadful horror doth now possess and fill the parted souls of those which

have lived in that sin; surely they would rather take a Toad into their bosomes, than embrace the bosome of an Harlot.

(2.) The second Temptation whereby the wicked one draweth young men unto the commission of sin, is, *by the glory and repute of it.* Not long after our Saviour was baptized, he was led into the wilderness, and tempted by the wicked one, and amongst other temptations, this was one, the discovery and proffer which he made unto him of the glory of the world, if he would fall down and worship him, *Luk. 4. 5, 6, 7.* And with the proposals of glory and repute in a way of sin he doth perswade young men to the practice thereof; in the management of which Temptation,

1. He doth represent unto them the waies of God as reproachful, the service of God as ridiculous, the people of God as the most contemptible persons under the Sun, as base, ignoble, and mean-spirited people; hiding the high dignity and honour the Lord hath conferred upon them.

2. He covereth the shame and disgrace of sin, he doth what he can to hide from their consideration the filthiness and loathsome nature of it, and what confusion of face will be the consequent of sin at the last.

3. He putteth a glorious attire upon sin, and painteth it over with such fair colours, and representeth it unto them with such a varnish of brightness and beauty, that it seemeth to them very desirable. He useth many arts to bring sin into credit, and employeth his cursed Agents to commend sin with the highest

Elogiums,

Elogiums, as if it were a noble thing, and worthy of great repute, to encourage young men by acclamations of bravery of spirit, when they aspire to be wicked in a high degree.

4. And so fourthly, joyning in with the lust of Pride and a desire of esteem, he doth provoke them to do any thing which may make for their repute.

But dear young ones, labour to overcome this temptation of the wicked one, whereby he would draw you to sin by the *glory and repute of it*; which that you may do, consider,

1. That sin hath no repute, except it be amongst the vilest persons, whose esteem thereof doth render it so much the more odious and abominable.

2. That the Holiness of God is his most glorious Attribute, and therefore sin which is directly opposite hereunto can have no real glory in it, therefore sin is the only abominable thing which he hateth, therefore he lightly esteemeth, he looketh upon afar off, he scorneth and despiseth, he loatheth and abhorreth all the workers of iniquity.

3. That the honour of sin is empty, vain, windy, short, transitory, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, it soon vanisheth away, and will quickly end in disgrace, in shame and confusion.

4. That sin is matter of the greatest shame in the world, as it dishonoureth God, defileth the soul, blotteth the name, enslaveth the whole man unto the black Prince of darkness; and will bring upon such as live in the practice of it, contempt and scorn at the appearance of Jesus Christ.

To shew how the world doth draw young men into temptation (3.) The third Temptation whereby the wicked one doth draw young men unto the commission of sin, is by the utility and advantage of it: He perswadeth them that such and such sins will bring in much profit and emolument unto them; and so joyning in with the lust of covetousness and worldly-mindedness, he draweth them unto sin. Hereby it was that *Achan* was tempted to take the silver, and gold, and Babylonish garment, which God had expressly forbidden, *Josh. 7. 21*. Hereby it was that *Gebuzi* was tempted to take the Talents and change of rayment of *Naaman*, which his Master had refused; *2 King. 5. 20, 23*. Hereby *Ahab* was tempted to permit the cutting off of *Naboth* for his Vineyard, *1 King. 21. 4, 5, &c*. Hereby *Judas* was tempted to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver, *Matth. 26. 15*. Hereby *Demas* was tempted to forsake the Truth, and cleave to this present world, *2 Tim. 4. 10*. And here the wicked one doth represent a great conveniency to themselves and families in getting earthly gain, whatever sin they commit to effect it: And he doth sometimes perswade them of a necessity of these gains, that they cannot live without them; and a necessity of such and such sins, as lying, over-reaching, oppression, and the like, without which they could not thrive.

But young men, take heed of being overcome by the wicked one here, of being taken with the bait of profit and worldly advantage. Consider,

1. What the Apostle saith, *1 Tim. 6. 10, 11*. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown them in perdition and destruction: For the love of money

is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves thorow with many sorrows. And then think with your selves whether there be a conveniency in unlawful gains: Is it convenient to be entangled and drowned? Is it convenient to make shipwrack of faith, and to make shipwrack of the soul? Is it convenient to wound the conscience with guilt, and pierce the heart with many sorrows? Are these things (the attendants of sin by this temptation) more gainful or more hurtful? Is it convenient to steal a Cloak which is infected with the Plague, and will bring death almost as soon as warmth? Is it convenient to gain any thing which shall be mingled with Gods curse, a far worse evil than that of the Plague? Consider, is there nothing lost by sinful gains? What think you of the favour of God, which is better than life; of the peace of conscience, which is a continual feast; of grace here, and glory hereafter, the choicest treasures? Can any sinful gain out-balance that which is lost by sin?

2. Moreover as to the plea of necessity, consider that most of those necessities which the worldlings suppose they have of these things, are created necessities, created by themselves, but fancied necessities; they are necessities only to satisfy the lust, not for the stay and support of life. Nature craveth but very little for necessity; what necessity is there of getting so much to lay out upon superfluities? what need so much to lay up for posterity? and would not the Lord supply necessities, if you kept within the bounds of duty, and cast your care upon him? hath not he given the life, and would not he give meat? hath not he given the body, and would not he give

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rayment?

rayment? doth not he take care of irrational creatures? and would not he take care of you? hath not he promised? and is he not faithful?

But what necessity is there of sin, to get the good things of this life? Duty is necessary to all, but sin is never necessary to any. There is one thing necessary, to get an interest in Christ, and lay up the treasure in Heaven; but it is not necessary to commit any sin to get provisions for the body and family; yea, it is dangerous and destructive: Sin, whatever necessity is pretended, will bring ruine and damnation upon such as live in the practice of it: Better starve the body, than damn the soul; better the body should drop presently into the pit of the grave through want, than that the soul should drop into the pit of Hell through sin: A man had better be without meat or drink, without house or friend; yea, he had better lose his life a thousand times, if it were possible, than to live in the practice of any known sin, though all these might be preserved hereby; because the gain of all these, yea of the whole world, cannot countervail the loss of the soul, *Matth. 16. 26.* But who can plead such necessity as this for sin?

(4.) The fourth Temptation whereby the wicked one doth draw young men unto the commission of sin, is, *by the pretended smallness of it.* As Lot said of Zoar, Is it not a little one? they are but small faults; if it were blasphemy, or murder, or adultery, or drunkenness, or the like heinous sins, there might be more scruple; but they are but little sins, small ones, and not many, a little wantonness, lying, and the like.

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But dear young men, be not overcome by the pretence of the smallness of sin, considering,

1. That no sin is little or small in its own nature ; Though some sins have more venome in them than others, yet all are of a poisonous nature : Some sins are greater, but all are great ; all are the breaches of the Law of the great, the infinite Majesty of Heaven and Earth ; and that which hath an infinite object cannot be small. *Est eadem ratio rotundi in nummulo exiguo, quæ est in magno*, there is the same reason of roundness in a small piece of money, as in the greatest ; and there is the same reason of sin in small sins, that there is in the most heinous, because it is committed against the same Law of the same God. See Jam. 2. 10, 11. *Wh. soever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law.* Though you should refrain some sins, yet if you venture to commit others, though they be less sins, and allow your selves therein, you break the Law of the same God, and are under the guilt and power of sin, and as equally liable to the punishment of sin, as those which live in the practice of those which are most notorious : And let me tell you, that it is as hard to get a pardon for those sins which you call small ones, as for the greatest ; God can as easily pardon the one as the other ; the smallest sins require the infinite mercy of God, and the infinite merits of Christ for their pardon ; therefore no sin is in it self small.

2. Consider, is the thing but small which you are tempted unto ? this in some respect aggravateth the offence, if you yield to the temptation : A man that

will forfeit the favour of his Prince, or friend, for a small thing, it argueth a great slighting of their favour: So the least wilful sin argueth a great slighting of the favour of God, which hereby is forfeited. *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not encrease thy wealth by their price,* saith the Psalmist, when he apprehended that God took little regard to his people, *Psal. 44. 12.* So may I say on the contrary, when you will offend God for a small thing, you do, as it were, sell your God for nought, and what advantage will you get hereby? It was the saying of our Saviour, *Mat. 24. 26. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? And what can a man give in exchange for his soul?* Much more may I say; What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his God? and what can a man give in exchange for God, who is the chief good, and in whom doth consist our chiefest happiness? But if you will lose or exchange your God for nought, for a trifle, by little sins, this, as it argueth great folly; so it is a great aggravation of sin.

3. Consider that the least sin which you allow your selves in the practice of, is sufficient to damn your souls. A small leak in a ship unstopped, will quickly let in water enough to drown the ship, though not so soon as the greatest breach. A prick with a pin in the heart, will as surely kill a man, as a wound with a sword: So the least sin unrepented of, will as surely shipwreck and destroy the soul, as the greatest and most heinous offences. The Law curseth and condemneth every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them, *Gal. 3. 10.* And such as lie under the curse cannot inherit the blessing. Let not
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any think then to get to Heaven, who allow themselves in the practice of the least sins; who make no conscience of petty oaths, officious lyes, idling away their precious time, and the like, which are accounted small and trivial things by the men of the world.

4. Consider, though the wicked one seemeth modest and shamefaced in his first temptations in asking but little things, yet he will not rest there, but by degrees will proceed further, and hereby bring you unto the commission of greater. As the habits of grace, so the habits of sin are strengthened by degrees; though the beginning be but small, yet within a little while sin will greatly encrease. Rivers at first arise from small springs, which in running gather waters, and encrease into a great stream: So actual sins (I speak not of original sin, which is a deep and unsearchable fountain, from whence actual sin doth arise, and by which it is fed) I say, actual sins in their first beginning are but small, which if a man alloweth himself in the practice of, they will swell and encrease, and carry him with a strong stream towards the Ocean of Gods wrath; if you make no conscience of small sins, you will easily be tempted to those which are great and more notorious. First, Satan will propose sin to your thoughts, it is no great thing to think; and if you can dally with sin in your thoughts, then he will by delightful pleasing thoughts of sin lay siege to your will; it is no great matter to desire, if you do not act; then if the fort of the will be taken, all the under-forts of the affections will quickly yield; and when you have entertained sin in your hearts, you will be tempted to proceed further, to vent it at your lips; it is no great thing to speak, and then, as you have

have opportunity, he will tempt you to practice; go a little further, the sin is sweet, try but once, put but one step into this way, and retire again as soon as you will; and when once you have committed the act, it may be with smitings and reluctance of conscience, then he will entice again; it cannot be much worse, try once again, and by degrees the reluctance wears off; and though you commit sin at first with more regret, yet afterwards you will do it with more ease and delight; yea, with greediness and resolution, with hardness and obstinacy; and one great sin will make way for the commission of more; so that in time you will not forbear the greatest sins. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*, no man arriveth to the highest degree of wickedness upon a sudden, but is step by step drilled on by the Devil, and his own hearts lusts from little sins to the greatest. By degrees Gods reverence is more lessened, the will more enclined, the conscience more seared, the habits of sin more strengthened, the Devil more encouraged, and so way is made for any sin. Lesser Commandments (saith one) are a hedge about the greatest; if by small sins you break down this hedge, you will quickly make breaches upon the greater too: Smaller sins many times will engage you to commit greater, to maintain and defend them; the least link in a chain will draw the greatest after it. If you would be kept from great sins, you must take heed of the first beginnings, *obsta principii*, &c. A small wound in the body, if it be not looked after, may fester and gangrene, and endanger the life: So small sins, if not stopt and healed, will breed a gangrene in the spirit, and bring certain death and destruction. If you do not resist the beginnings of sin, it will be hard to make head
against

against it afterwards, when it hath got more strength: It will be as hard to leave off a custom of sin, which will be a second nature, as for the *Aethiopian* to change his skin, or the *Leopard* his spots. *Non obtinebis ut desinam, si incipere permiseris: Imbecillis est primò, vires dum procedit parat: Excluditur facilius quàm expellitur: Facilius non recipiuntur quàm exeunt:* saith *Seneca*. Vice is but weak at the first, it gathereth strength as it proceedeth; it is easier kept out, than thrust out; it is easier not to receive it, than being received, to leave it. Dear Youths, take heed then of small sins, resist the first motions and temptations to sin, crush sin in the first rising of it, delight not in the thoughts of it: Keep your hearts, guard your senses if you would overcome this temptation of the wicked one.

(5.) The fifth Temptation whereby the wicked one doth draw young men to the commission of sin, is, *by the hopes of future repentance*. You may allow your selves a little longer in the practice of sin; you may rejoyce, and take pleasure in the dayes of your youth, it is time enough hereafter to think of growing serious and religious, to think of repenting and turning, and making your peace with God. That you may overcome this temptation, remember what hath been said already, concerning the uncertainty of your Life, the uncertainty of the Means of grace, the uncertainty of Gods working by the Means.

Thus much for the first particular, concerning the most ordinary and prevailing Temptations whereby the wicked one doth draw young men to sin.

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SECT. VII.

2. **T**HE Second thing is to caution you against some particular sins of Youth, which the wicked one would draw you unto.

Now there are these 20 sins of Youth, which I shall caution you against.

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| 1. <i>Uncleanness.</i> | 12. <i>A Frothy spirit.</i> |
| 2. <i>Drunkenness.</i> | 13. <i>Scoffing.</i> |
| 3. <i>Gluttony.</i> | 14. <i>Pride.</i> |
| 4. <i>Gaming.</i> | 15. <i>Censoriousness.</i> |
| 5. <i>Quarrelling.</i> | 16. <i>Procrastination of Repentance.</i> |
| 6. <i>Swearing.</i> | 17. <i>Carnal Security.</i> |
| 7. <i>Lying.</i> | 18. <i>Carnal Confidence.</i> |
| 8. <i>Unfaithfulness.</i> | 19. <i>Rashness.</i> |
| 9. <i>Disobedience.</i> | 20. <i>Unsteadfastness.</i> |
| 10. <i>Idleness.</i> | |
| 11. <i>Sabbath-breaking.</i> | |

1. Young men, take heed of *uncleanness*. The wicked one will be busie to tempt you, and your hearts in these years will be most ready to encline you; youthfull lusts are now apt to stir within you, especially in such a City as this, where there are so many objects to entice your eye and heart; but for your Life, take heed that you be not drawn to this sin. Flee fornication and adultery; other sins are without the body, but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body, 1 Cor. 6. 18. Not to speak any thing of mens weakening and consuming their bodies by their frequency in this sin: he that

that committeth fornication defileth his body, it is a filthy nasty sin: hereby the body is more defiled in the eyes of God, than if the body were drenched in a Jakes: it is just with God that such as venture upon this sin should, as many do, get the foul disease hereby, and that their members should rot and putrifie whilst they are alive. He that committeth fornication or adultery, sinneth against his own soul, he defileth his soul, he woundeth his soul, and he destroyeth his soul; his heart, which should be Gods Temple, is hereby defiled, and he doaths such an habitation; his Conscience which whilst whole, is a continual Feast, is hereby wounded; his spirit, which whilst chaste and clean is safe, is hereby exposed unto inevitable ruine and destruction: Therefore it is a foolish factish thing to commit this sin. See Prov. 6. 32, 33. *Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding, he that doth it destroyeth his own soul: a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* Such as commit this sin blot their Name, as well as defile their Spirit; wound their Reputation, as well as wound their Conscience; but chiefly, they lack understanding, because hereby they destroy their own Soul. Young men; look into two or three Scriptures, which methinks should be sufficient to deterre you from this sin, where you may perceive, whatever sweetness and pleasure this sin may promise and yield, that bitterness and destruction is at the end, and in the conclusion. See Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5. *The lips of a strange woman drop as an hony-comb, and her mouth is smoother than Oyl: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword; her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.* See also Prov.

Prov. 7. from *vers. 6.* to the end of the chapter; where *Solomon* speaketh of the young man void of understanding, whom he took notice of out of his window, meeting with an Harlot, who enticed him, and perswaded him to accompany her to the bed of lust; and he telleth you that he went after her, as an Oxe to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks; as a bird to the snare, till an arrow struck thorow his liver, not perceiving the danger he was in of his life. Therefore he calleth upon young men to hearken, and take warning, and to turn away their feet from her paths; and that because her house goeth down to Hell: and *chap. 2. 19.* he telleth you, that none that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of Life. This sin doth so stupifie men, that it is ten thousand to one but you go to Hell without ever thinking of returning, if you commit it: for he that committeth fornication or adultery, sinneth against God, and he severely threatneth all such, *Heb. 13. 4.* *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* And it is a fearfull thing to fall into the bands of the living God, *Heb. 10. 31.* Hereafter you will be repayed with ten thousand times more pain and heartsgrief in Hell, than ever you found delight in this sin.

Young men, take heed of Uncleanness; as you ever hope for salvation, and to escape future wrath, refrain this sin, take heed of actual adultery; avoid occasions, come not neer the places where Harlots live; shun the company of such as are light and wanton; entice not any, by speech, or look, or behaviour, neither be enticed your selves; take heed of

of going to Stage-plays, where a dart may strike your heart, where you may have incentives to the sin by the immodest actions of actors, or the immodest garb of spectators. Come not neer the flame, lest a fire be enkindled in your bosomes before you are aware; be not found in the Devils School, lest he catch you in his snare, and binde you, and lead you captive. If the wicked one assault you in your place, and you be tempted by any that converse with you, flee the place, as *Joseph* when his Mistress enticed him, say, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* And young Virgins, yield not to this sin, if you be inticed; encourage not any by your carriage to make an attempt; rush out of the hands of the temptation with speed and indignation; proclaim the shame of any that shall twice move you; keep your selves chaste and pure, it is your ornament, it is your glory.

Young men, take heed of actual uncleanness with others, and take heed of self-pollutions, which are Murder and Adultery before God; do not dishonour your own bodies by your selves. Take heed of speculative uncleanness, do not look upon a woman to lust after her. Make a Covenant with your eyes, that you may not think upon a Maid; suppress the first rising of lust in your minde; get this evil concupiscence mortified by vertue drawn from Christs death, and the operation of the Spirit; beat down your flesh with labour and abstinence, if you finde your selves very prone to this sin; and if no other course will do to quench the burning, God hath appointed a remedy by Marrying: But diligently and faithfully use all other means first, if other considerations do not move you to that Relation.

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This Treatise would swell into too great a bulk, should I speak thus largely concerning every sin; therefore I shall be more brief in the rest.

2. Young men, take heed of *Drunkennes*. You are strong in body, be not strong to drink unto excess. This sin will distemper your body, intoxicate your spirit, and destroy your soul; take heed of it; it is one of the fruits of the flesh, *Gal. 5. 21.* and such as commit it cannot have any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* think of the bitter cup of Gods wrath hereafter, which you must drink of, if you exceed the measure in your sweet cups here. Take heed of frequenting those places, I mean Taverns and Alehouses, where the temptation doth chiefly lye; neither go into those places often, neither stay in those places longer than need doth require. Take heed of the company of drunkards, turn away from them, if they tempt you; shake them off if they hang upon you; choose sober persons for your associates and familiars. Take heed of the ungodly practice of drinking Healths, a heathenish custom, too much in use amongst some loose Christians; I might say, a hellish custom, which the Devil doth put men upon, that it might be a shooing-horn to drunkenness. You are half perswaded to be drunk, when you are perswaded to drink a health, forbear it, it is an occasion of much sin.

3. Young men, take heed of *Gluttony*, especially in these leasure dayes, wherein so much time and cost is layed out in Feasts. This Gluttony is called by our Saviour, *surfeiting*, which he warneth his Disciples

Disciples against, Luk. 21. 34. *Take heed to your selves; lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and that day overtake you at unawares:* Here Gluttony and Drunkenness are coupled together, as being much of the same nature, the one is *drinking to excess*, the other is *eating to excess*; then our Saviour biddeth, take heed of *overcharging their hearts*; when the body is overcharged with meat, the heart is overcharged, the Soul is overcharged as well as the Body, and therefore unfit for the service either of God or Man. Then he commandeth them to take heed, lest at any time they overcharge themselves with such excesses; it is not lawfull at any time, neither on ordinary dayes, neither on extraordinary dayes, not on Feasting dayes; God alloweth his people to feast, but not to gluttonize; they may eat for necessity, and something for delight, but they must never eat unto excess, to distemper and discompose themselves for action. And lastly, he subjoyns an awakening Consideration, *lest that day overtake them at unawares*, lest the day of Judgement overtake them, if not of the generall Judgement, yet of their particular Judgement; lest Death should surprize them, and the wrath of God should surprize them at unawares, and they should be taken away in the act of this sin, as Psal. 78. 30, 31. *Whilest the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.*

4. Young men, take heed of Gaming. Some sports are lawfull, and innocent, and needfull at some times for the health of the body, but take

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heed your affections be not set upon any Sports, and that you spend not more time in them than is needfull. But there are other Games that are useles and hurtfull; that are thieves of money and time, and unlawfull; such as Carding and Dicing, which being pure Lottery, and Lottery being a sacred thing should not be made use of in Games, (as I conceive) no more than Oaths in common discourse. Cards may well be termed the Devils Books, and Dice the Devils Game; look not into those books, though they have no sense in them, yet they will strangely bewitch you to spend hours and nights together in turning them over: Throw not away your time with the Dye, you can never recover what you lose, I mean your precious time; not to say any thing of the danger you will be in of spending all you have, as some who have been worth many thousand pounds at night, have not been worth a thousand pence by the morning. There is no exercise of the body in these Games, and I am sure there is a corrupting of the Minde, and a loss of the precious time; and what plea can you have for such Games? Have you no employment for your time? Is it not pity that so many golden hours should run waste? Be not enticed to this sin by Friends; be not perswaded to it by custome; if you will do as the most do, you must go where the most goe, and that is to Hell. Think, if you lay upon your death-bed, whether this sin of Gaming would not trouble you; and whether those will not have more peace, that out of Conscience have forborn to touch a Card or Dye all their life-time.

5. Young men, take heed of *Quarrelling*; forbear gaming, and you will be out of the occasion of many quarrels. Take heed of a contentious spirit: In your young blood and strength of body, you are apt to have that which the world falsely terms a high spirit, and may be ready to offer affronts and injuries to others, and be able to bear none; but let me tell you, that such a spirit is a low, base spirit, a mean ignoble spirit: The high spirit indeed is such a spirit, as is most like the Spirit of Christ, he who had the most noble soul that ever God created, and his Spirit was humble and meek, who did injury to none, but bore all injuries patiently; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not; when he was smitten, he did not return blow for blow. This was noble. Young ones, labour to be like unto Jesus Christ in meekness, and patient bearing injuries and reproaches: Strife and contention comes from beneath, and is termed *James 3.* devillish; but meekness and patience cometh down from above, and will truly ennoble you; a meek and quiet spirit, not on'y in women, but also in young men, is their ornament, and before God of great price, *1 Pet. 3. 4.*

6. Young men, take heed of *Swearing*; It is the expresse command of our Saviour, *Matth. 5. 34, 37.* I say unto you, Swear not at all, &c. that is, in your ordinary discourse, but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatever is more than these cometh of evil. If you will be Christs Disciples, you must obey him. What advantage can you get by

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this sin? What honour is it to swear? What pleasure can you finde in it? be sure it will bring damage, it provoketh God to punish, he hath threatned to curse swearers. We read *Zach. 5. 2, 3.* of a flying Roll, the length twenty cubits, the breadth ten cubits, which is interpreted to be the curse that goeth over the face of the Earth, to cut off him that stealeth on one side, and him that sweareth on the other side. God threatneth to condemn swearers, *Jam. 5. 12.* *Above all things swear not, lest ye fall into condemnation.* Take heed of the horrid oaths of the roaring Blades in our times, and take heed of more petty oaths of faith and troth; take heed also of cursing, and taking Gods Name in vain, remembering that the Lord will not hold such guiltless.

7. Young men, take heed of *Lying.* See *Eph. 4. 25.* *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth.* You would not speak lyes, if the party you spoke them unto did know and could prove them to be lyes, the intent of lyes being to cover: God knoweth your lyes, you cannot cover any thing from him; and God being Truth, loveth truth, and hateth lyes, and hath threatned lyars to give them their portion in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* Take heed of accustoming your selves to this sin of lying whilst you are young, it will be hard ever leaving it. Whatever advantage you may think to get by a lye, I am sure your damage will be greater: Whatever credit you may think to get by a lye, your dishonour is greater: Whatever fault you cover by a lye, you do hereby
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the more aggravate it: Whatever kindness you may think to do another by a lye, you do your selves a thousand-fold more injury: Though you may account lyes but words, and words but wind, yet for such words you will be condemned, and such a wind as one faith, is sufficient to blow your souls into Hell.

8. Young men, take heed of *Unfaithfulness*. You that are Apprentices, or Servants, take heed of unfaithfulness to your Masters, that you do not wrong and defraud them in the least, remembering that dreadful threatning, that God will be avenged upon all defrauders, *1 Thes. 4. 6.* They may not know your fraud and deceit, but God is privy to it, and the vengeance will be fearful which one day he will recompence unto you for this sin. Read the duty of servants in this regard, *Tit. 2. 10.* where they are warned against parloining, and exhorted to shew all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Be faithful to your Masters as to their estates, their money and goods; be careful as if they were your own; do not wrong them, or any else whilst young; remembering that you must make restitution, as ever you hope for salvation, if you be able to do it; and be faithful to them as to their counsels; do not blaze abroad their secrets; do not make known their infirmities; serve them with all uprightness and fidelity, as if you were to serve Christ himself for indeed he will count it so, and hath promised a reward to faithful servants, beyond what their Masters can give, *Eph. 6. 8. Col. 3. 24.*

9. Young men, take heed of *Disobedience*. Children obey your Parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to God, Col. 3. 20. For this is the first Commandment with promise, Ephes. 6. 2. Servants be obedient unto them which are Masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, Ephes. 6. 5, 6. Here is a copy of your duty, take heed of the contrary sin, which the wicked one will be busie to tempt you unto. In disobeying Parents and Governours, you are disobedient unto God, and displease Christ your great Master; if they be strangers to Christ, you ought to obey them, except in those things which are unlawful. Young ones that are yet under Government, take heed of disobedience; as obedience will be rewarded by Christ, so disobedience will be punished by him at his second appearance; Be not disobedient to Governours, and behave not your selves irreverently towards the aged and gray-headed, for you ought to honour the silver-hair.

10. Young men, take heed of *Idleness*. Do not loiter away your time, especially the time of your youth: Time is very precious, the time of your youth is most precious, the choicest and chiefest; it is your seed-time, your gathering-time; you are now more active and fit for employment; you may happily spare a month better if you should live beyond fifty years, than an hour now; your whole time is short, the time of your youth will be slipt away

away quickly: Youth and old age will steal on you before you are aware; but you play idle whilst young: You can call no time yours but the present: O how precious is the present hour! think if the damned had but one hour given them, how they would esteem and improve it: I have heard of a Lady at her death, who had mis-spent the time of her life, groaned out in her last breath this sad speech with bitterness and earnestness, *O ten thousand worlds for one quarter of an hour more!* Take heed of lavishing away your time in sin and vanity; let not an hour pass without doing something; fill up your whole time with duty; you may eat, and drink, and sleep, but let not the concerns of your body, devour too much of your precious time; let them not have more of your time than is necessary, more than is duty. Redeem your time, double your diligence, remember how much of your time is irrecoverably gone; how much of your work is still to do; remember how near you are to eternity when time shall be no more; therefore apply your hearts to wisdom, and whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might. Take heed of idleness in your particular callings; be diligent in your secular employments; the diligent hand maketh rich; but the slothful person is brother to him that is a great waster: Take heed of idleness, of spiritual sloth in your general Callings: Take heed of wholly neglecting the duties of Gods Worship, either publick, or family, or closet; of neglecting to hear, or read, or pray; and take heed of negligence in these duties; there is a curse denounced against such as do the work of the

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Lord negligently, *Jer.* 48. 10. You must not be slothful; if you would be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the Promises, *Heb.* 6. 12.

11. Young men, take heed of *Sabbath-breaking*: Do not idle away this day as too many young men do, in the fields, in visits, in vain company, much less in Taverns, or Alehouses, in drinking, and greater wickedness than all the week besides. Value the Sabbath day, above all the daies of the week; spend it in the duties of Gods immediate Worship; you may get something in the shop on the week day, you may get more in Gods House and Ordinances on the Lords day, spiritual light, and life, and strength, and peace, and joy, Gods favour; Jewels of grace, evidences for Heaven, are worthy your seeking; do not lose such benefits as these by profaning the Sabbath-day, by suffering worldly business to entrench upon this sacred time, which God hath sanctified, and you ought to keep holy.

12. Young men, take heed of *a frothy spirit*. Some young ones are full of froth and vanity, very toyish and foolish, without any solidity or seriousness. It is time for you now to put away childish things; get the vanity of your minds emptied; let the frothiness and levity of your spirits be curbed by the fear of God, an awful apprehension of his omnipresence, and all-seeing eye; put your spirits under the Government of the Lord Jesus Christ.

13. Young

13. Young men, take heed of *Scoffing*. If you have wit, let it not vent it self in scurrility, in jesting and jeering at others, which the Apostle cautioneth against as inconvenient and unbecoming the Gospel, *Ephes. 5. 4.* Do not mock at others infirmities, but pity them; let nothing be the object of your scorn, except it be sin, neither should you scoff at others for their sins; but labour to reduce them by your friendly admonitions. Above all, take heed of scoffing at any for their holiness and strict walking, which is an undoubted character of a prophane and carnal heart; and such persons as do so, are scorned by God, and most contemptible in his eyes.

14. Young men, take heed of *Pride*. Do not over-value and esteem your selves; do not conceit an excellency in your selves above others, but with lowliness of mind esteem others above your selves: If you have any gifts and attainments that may be useful, glorifie God with them in your sphere; be thankful for them; and withall, be so well acquainted with your imperfections and secret corruption of heart, that you may be humble. Be not proud of gifts of mind, much less of strength and beauty of body, and least of all, of hair, which is but an excrement, or of clothes, which are a badge of mans Apostacy. Remember that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall: That God looketh upon the proud afar off, when he hath a respect to the lowly, *Psal. 138. 6.* That God resisteth the proud, when he giveth grace to the humble, *1 Pet. 5. 6.*

15. Young

15. Young men, take heed of *Censoriousness*, of rash judging of others. Take the caution of our Saviour against this sin, *Matth. 7. 1, 2, 3.* Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgement ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again. And why beholdest thou, the mote that is in thy brothers eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? If you censure others, you will be censured again; be sure ye will be judged and condemned by God; you are apt to spy little faults, moles in others, be acquainted with the beam in your own eye, with your own greater faults, and you will not then be so forward to judge. Take one more Scripture, which cautioneth you against this sin, *Jam. 4. 11, 12.* Speak not evil one of another; he that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law. He doth in effect say, that the Law which condemneth this sin, is not so fit a Law. But if thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a Judge. There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy? Who art thou that judgest another?

16. Young men, take heed of *Procrastinating your Repentance*. Do not put off this great work until to morrow; remember what hazards you run; how uncertain life is; how unlikely that ever you should repent, if you do not improve your youthful season for it. Set about the work presently, break off your sins by repentance presently, and make

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your peace with God without further delay, lest you be cut off from the Land of the living before you are aware, and hereafter there will be no room for repentance.

17. Young men, take heed of carnal security. You have health, and strength, and peace, and prosperity: it may be mowed, and never tasted the bitter cup of Affliction; and therefore may be apt to be secure, and secretly hope that this state will last, that your Mountain is so strong, that you shall never be moved, that you shall never come into Adversity. Alas! you are little acquainted with the World; Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards; crosses, and cares, and losses, and sickness, and pain, and many miseries are the attendants of this Life; and you must look sooner or later, in one measure or other, to have your share: be not secure, but prepare, lest being unprovided, the miseries of this life be more irksome and unsupportable.

18. Young men, take heed of carnal Confidence. You may be apt now to put your trust in Arms of flesh, to repose much confidence in Friends or Means, and some external props; but you will finde them all like broken reeds, or a foot out of joynt; and where you have the greatest hope and trust, you are like to meet with the greatest disappointment: Cease then from Man, whose breath is in his nostrils; trust not in uncertain riches; stay not upon any Creature; but put your trust in the Lord, who is omnipotent and faithfull, in him

him, you may be secure as to the greatest evil, and you may have confidence of all needfull supplies.

19. Young men, take heed of *Rashness*. Be not rash in your Promises, lest you repent, or be found unfaithfull; Be not rash in your Undertakings, in your engagement in any businss; especially take heed of rashness in changing your condition. Remember that Proverb; *That Youth rideth post to be married; and lodgeth in the Inn of Repentance*. In all the weighty affairs of your life, Pray to God earnestly for his guidance; consult with wise and faithfull friends; and seriously deliberate things in your own mindes. Observe the rule of the Word, and let your design be the glory of God.

20. And lastly, young men, take heed of *Unsteadfastness*. Be not inconstant in your resolutions as to civil affairs and undertakings; but especially take heed of inconstancy and unsteadfastness in the wayes of God. Take heed of a wavering, unsettled minde, of backslidings and revoltings from God; let not your Zeal degenerate into Lukewarmness, and your present Forwardness end in Apostacy. But watch, stand fast in the Faith, quit your selves like men, be strong, 1 Cor. 16. 13. and with full purpose of heart stick close unto the Lord, *Act. 11. 23.*

Labour to keep your selves from these sins of Youth which the wicked one would draw you unto, that so you may be victorious, and if you overcome, you shall eat of the tree of Life which is

is in the Paradise of God, *Rev. 2. 7.* You shall not be hurt of the second death, *v. 11.* You shall eat of the hidden Manna, and have the white stone, wherein the new Name is written, which none can read but they that receive it, *v. 17.* You shall have the Morning Star, *v. 28.* You shall be clothed in White Raiment, and Christ will confess your Name before his Father, and before the Angels, *chap. 3. 5.* You shall be Pillars in the Temple of God, and go no more out, and have the Name of God written upon you, *v. 12.* You shall sit with Christ on his throne, as he overcame, and is set down with his Father on his throne, *v. 21.*

My most dearly beloved young men, labour thus, that you may be such young men as are commended in the Text, to be strong, that the Word of God may abide in you, and to overcome the wicked one.

SECT. VIII.

AN D now I shall shut up my whole Discourse with a few words for encouragement of you in these Duties.

1. This will be your *Wisdom*; who so is wise will observe these things. Read one place concerning *David's* wisdom upon this account, *Psal. 119. 98, 99, 100.* *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients; because I keep thy precepts.* Remember, that the fear of the Lord is the

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the beginning of Wisdom, it is the chief part of Wisdom, and they have the best understanding that keep his Commandements, *Psal. 111. 10.*

2. This will be your *Glory*. This will be an ornament of Grace unto your head, and like a Chain about your neck, *Prov. 1. 9.* It will make you shine like Lights in a dark World, and it will not only render you truly honourable, but also tend exceedingly to your Masters glory.

3. This will be your *Advantage*. It will bring in the truest, purest, surest, and most lasting gain.

4. This will be your *Safety*. This will shelter you under the wings of the Almighty, secure you in times of great Judgements here, and from storms of future wrath.

5. This will be your *Peace*. Great peace have they that love Gods Law, and nothing shall disturb them. This will yield peace and comfort to you in Life, this will bear up your spirits in the hour of Death, and at length procure for you a Crown of Glory which fadeth not away.

Be strong then, O ye young Men, because in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not.

Let the Word of God abide in you, because of the Treasure laid up for you.

And overcome the Wicked one, because of the Crown of Glory which shall be set upon the head of the Conquerers.

Vincenti Corona dabitur.

F I N I S.